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Shawn Brackhill

Baltimore kids raving to DJ K-Swift

One of the best parties I've been to this year didn't have an open bar. It wasn't full of "beautiful people" or "tastemakers," and nobody was taking party photos to plaster all over the internet. The good people of Baltimore were, however, going completely insane (see photo of Ari's chest, Schnipper, and Jarboe above). They were going perhaps more insane than New York knows how to go on a good night, with little more than a warehouse, a sound system, and the right DJ—in this case, Baltimore's Club Queen K-Swift.

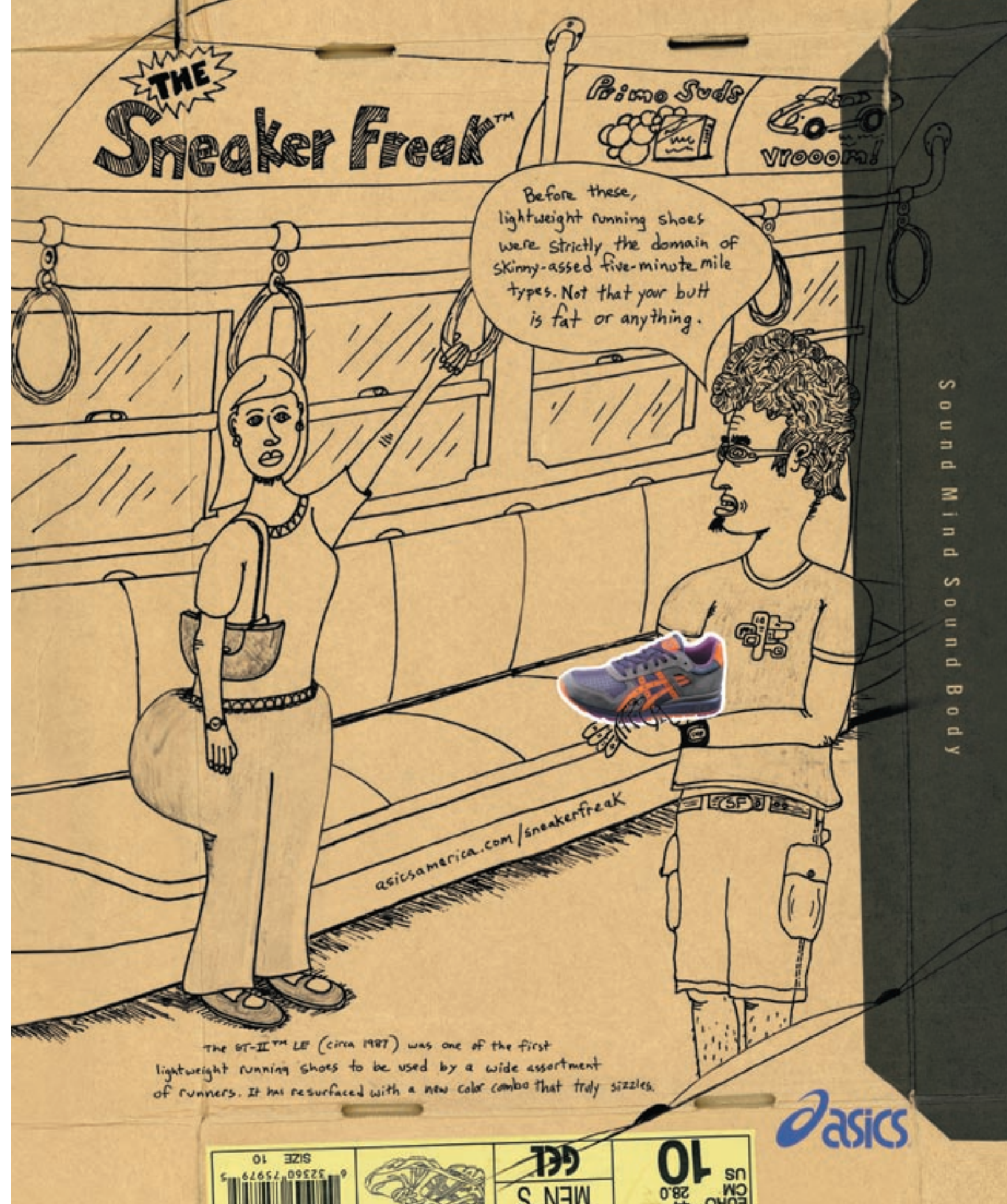
So now you know how and why K-Swift made it into this issue. Nobody sent us a press release or a CD, no PR person called me. I picked up some Bmore breaks records at Turntable Lab, fiended to hear more (as DJs do), then begged Ari and his roommate/Manhunter bandmate Jason to burn me some CDs. Thanks to a vast network of indie rock kids I found my way down to Baltimore and heard the music for my goddamn self-DIY raving at its finest.

I don't think I could assign stories for *XLR8R* if I didn't get out and experience the artists we write about live. There's something about listening to music—particularly dance music—in the right setting and with the right people that you can never duplicate in your headphones. The best albums and mixtapes are capable of encapsulating this feeling, bringing your mind to a particular time and place. (Most of my time between the ages of 12 and 14 was spent alone with my stereo, wishing I was in various British cities thanks to The Prodigy, Happy Mondays, and ragga drum & bass).

Then again, some records bring you to a place that you can't quantify, somewhere that doesn't exist yet. That's sort of the feeling I get when listening to Adult's new album, *Gimmie Trouble*. It reminds me of a lot of things—goth clubs when I was 16, being wired on the London subway, an art punk party in the basement of a high-rise on Amsterdam's outskirts—but of nothing I've heard at the same time. I guess that's probably the biggest compliment you can give a band in a time where 85% of acts sound pretty directly like someone that's preceded them.

So we roll on. We sift through piles of CDs, traverse states and continents, and blow our eardrums and retinas on the regular trying to find those things that are truly original, or at least heartfelt. Then we try to get them in the magazine. And that, my friends, is how we make each issue. Write us a letter and tell us if we're getting it right or not.

—Vivian Host, Editor



Sound Mind Sound Body



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SUBSCRIPTIONS: Domestic subscriptions are \$16 (one year, 10 issues) and \$32 (two years, 20 issues), Canada \$40 (one year) and \$80 (two year), all other international are \$50 (one year) and \$100 (two year). Subscribe by credit card online (www.xlr8r.com) or send payment to XLR8R Subscriptions, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117. Payment made out to "XLR8R Magazine," US funds only. International orders must be paid by credit card or international money order. Questions? Email subscribe@xlr8r.com or subscribe online at www.xlr8r.com.
CIRCULATION: Newsstand distribution through Curtis Circulation. For direct retail sales contact Jenn at 415.861.7583 x26 or jenn@amalgam.us.

BIG THANKS TO ... Matthew Harman at Paxton Gate, Sara DeRose at Creative Time, Jessica Linker, Nate Bosshard-Blackey at Burton, The Coffee Pot!, Jamie Proctor at Thrill Jockey, Kate Renyi at PF Flyers, Feedelity, Gary Hunt, Eric "Bones" Jones, Shawn "Muddy" Brackbill, Jason Urick and Jarboe for the great Baltimore adventure, Manhunter and Andrew for the DC hospitality, Oliver Kann at Adidas, Joel Speasmaker, Leah Perrin, Josh Walker, Debbie Socolow, Ira Issac, Zachary Law, Jessica Haran, Rachel Erin, Joshua Eustis, Chris Schlarb at VP, Basic Civitas books, Alison at Girle, Sarah at Favouritism, Eric at Forced Exposure, Matthew Conaway at M.A.C. Media, Laura Leon at Commonwealth Stacks.

ON THE COVER: Adult. photo by Nicola Kuperus; fur provided by Paxton Gate, SF (www.paxtongate.com)

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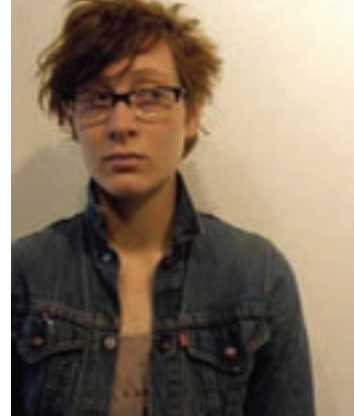
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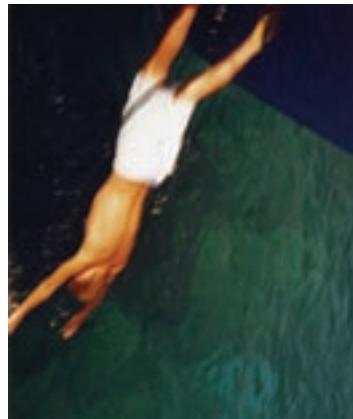
Piers cut his teeth as a scribe for *The Face* and the *New Musical Express* in the late '90s, where he was put off indie rock for life. Today he writes for *Vice* and *Uncut*, mostly about European electronic music, and contributes to *Whitaker's Almanack*. He lives in London where he runs a monthly disco night and enjoys swimming, melody, cooking, and raving. For this issue he interviews film director Chris Cunningham, an enlightening encounter he describes as "tense at first, then later, quite drunken."



ANNETTE MONNIER

Annette Monnier is a fine artist/illustrator who currently lives in Philadelphia, PA where she enjoys cooking, drawing, reading, and co-running Black Floor artist studios and gallery, with five of her closest friends. Annette graduated with honors from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 2003 with a BFA in sculpture. Her work has shown at The Stray Show (Chicago) and the Contemporary Art Museum of Cincinnati.

www.blackfloorgallery.com



DEREK MORRIS

Derek Morris is an artist, traveler, lover, and the mastermind of Trophy, based in San Francisco. In the future you can find him in Baja, NYC, London, Rio, and the annual Christmas in Vegas. He has contributed to *SOMA*, *Catastrophe*, and *NOON*. As well, he just finished editing his first film project, *The Next Contestant*, a documentary showcasing the participants of *The Price is Right* daytime game show, for which Trophy also provided the motion graphics. It premieres this fall at the Coney Island Film Festival.

www.trophygraphics.com



RYAN SOMMER

A prodigy of the freelance tech circuit, Ryan Sommer studied electronic circuit design under Nolan Bushnell, and earned his bullish business sense from an exclusive academy taught in low earth orbit by Sir Richard Branson. After writing for *Sync*, *Wired Magazine*, and G4 Tech TV, Sommer turned his insightful criticism and winning business strategies to videogames in an attempt to foster growth within the small, self-effacing industry. "This year's E3 was a good start," says Sommer. "But I think we need to punch up the wow factor a little bit."



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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my eyes to Nas, Gang Starr, Souls of Mischief, Del, Ghostface, Binary Star, Anticon, Andre Nickatina, Prefuse 73, Daedelus, etc. Currently, I am collecting forgotten classics such as The Ohio Players, Charizma and Peanut Butter Wolf, and Vanilla Fudge. I read your mag cause where else can you find reviews of albums that actually consist of creative music? Nowhere.

Geoffrey Hurowitz

Tomas replies: Thanks Geoffrey. *XLR8R* is lucky to have some of the most expert, experienced freelance music reviewers on our staff—but what we all have in common is the same insane passion for the music that you exhibit. Keep it up!

Another Music Fan Confesses

Hey *XLR8R*,

I read you every month and love what you do. I've been listening to music all my life. My mom loved music. She was a record collector, and she'd play music all day. She loved glam rock, disco, new wave, folk, soul, women singers, some prog, and more. Even though I had a musically open-minded mother, I didn't get fully bit by the music bug until I started to find music that reflected my sensibilities more. It was when I joined my school's college radio station that I developed my ear, tastes, and

knowledge more. I fell for electronic music in college, and it remains the music I'm most passionate about. When I left my station, I bought myself a pair of turntables and a mixer, and I joined a collectively run art space and became one of their main DJs. My love affair with music is 13 years strong.

Beth Gallagher

He's In Parties

XLR8R,

Just wanna give you guys some feedback on your killer mag. I usually read Ed's Rant first—cool guy that Ed [um, newflash—Ed is a *she!*-Tomas]. Then it's off to the table of contents to see if I recognize anyone you're profiling then off to the music reviews and then through the rest of the mag while I pop in the CD sampler (thanks—love those). I always keep your mag around and notice that while I usually don't recognize a lot of the artists right off the bat, if I go back and look at an issue from a few years back, I'll know most of the artists. So I kind of see *XLR8R* as a guide to what I'll be listening to in a year or two (but hopefully sooner). All right—time to go dance to some house music at Cafe Cocomo/Stompy and then to Lee Coombs at Mighty.

PleasureSean

Diary of a Music Fan

Dear *XLR8R*,

I have been listening to and collecting music my whole life. When I was too young to buy my own music, I would listen to the sweet music my dad would play such as Kid Creole and the Coconuts, Dr. Buzzards Original Savannah Band, Basia, Gloria Estefan, Buster Poindexter, The Rolling Stones, Fine Young Cannibals, The Neville Brothers, and many more. When I was older I started opening

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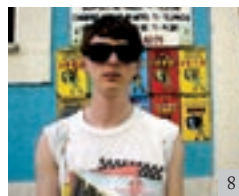
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BJ "BITTER" BASTARD SAYS: FOLK YOU



I know George Bush is trying to take things back to the 1950s, but that doesn't mean the music has to go with it. Whatever happened to music that actually reflects our current times? People are still doing the whole '80s "I'm living large and I'm high on coke so let's party" sound even though the economy remains firmly in the toilet, and the '70s redux is just as bad with bands like Kasabian trying to be Primal Scream trying to be the Rolling Stones. But perhaps the worst retro trend of all is what some people are calling "avant-folk." How very avant to sound like a deluded hippie smoking Thai stick and strumming a guitar. How cutting edge to wear flowing garments and sing about putting flowers in your hair and elves while a Texan in the White House tries to take away all our rights. Wake up and smell the petroleum—this is not the Summer of Love Part 2. Here's a guide to help you decode these frightening harbingers of the apocalypse.

1. Sufjan Stevens When this dude came out, a lot of people wondered if it was Cat Stevens and "Sufjan" was Cat's new Muslim name or something. I wish that were true, but alas Sufjan is just a dude who likes making plaintive soft songs about Midwestern states. In 2003, he did an album about Michigan; in July, he released *Illinois*. If that isn't limp enough, he also plays glockenspiel and sleigh bells and rhymes "alligator" with "Decatur." Okay, that's enough.

2. Mia Doi Todd I don't like typing Mia Doi Todd's name. I also don't like her pretentious, overwrought lyrics or her touchy-feely (in a bad way) genitalia metaphors. I think she needs to listen to some more 2 Live Crew.

3. Devendra Banhart When god complexes get together with hippies, it smells worse than the 15th row at a Dead show. This dude is famous for singing about motherlands, living like a hobo, and writing songs about animals like "Hey Mama Wolf" and "Owl Eyes." Help....can't breathe...your mystique is strangling me.

4. Fiery Furnaces This brother/sister duo makes me think only in adjectives that are cringe-worthy, namely "tinkly," "loosy goosy," and "rollicking." Cough.

5. Joanna Newsom Sadly *Lord of the Rings* is done, because Joanna Newsom would have been perfect as Frodo's wife. She sings in a creepy voice that sounds like it belongs to the dancing baby on *Ally McBeal*, writes elf songs, and plays a harp. I think there may be hidden Satanic messages in her music, since evil yuppie SF mayor Gavin Newsom is purportedly her cousin. Scary shit.

6. Iron and Wine This guy puts the wierdy in beardy and vice versa. Also, despite being from Florida he sports a weird accent (vaguely UK) and sounds like Donovan. You can hear his cover of Postal Service's "Such Great Heights" in the new M&M commercial, but I doubt this guy has ever eaten an M&M. He sounds like he mainly lives on twigs and berries.

7. Beachwood Sparks This band would love to be a sunny telegram from California circa the late '60s, but every time someone puts them on we feel like that day after acid when the ringing in our ears won't stop. They sound a whole hell of a lot like The Byrds, but since innocence died this mostly reminds us of annoying baby boomers.

8. Panda Bear Clearly this Animal Collective member has read *Iron John* too many times. His album, *Young Prayer*, is way more man catharsis than can be handled in one sitting.

9. The Court & Spark Well, first off this band has the same name as a Joni Mitchell album, which makes my 50-year-old sister laugh. Apparently, they call this alt-country nowadays, but wisps of dead folkie Nick Drake ring throughout. Magical, mystical, zzzzzzzzzz...

10. Will Oldham This dude is like the god of all these other dudes, despite the fact that most of his tracks sound like they were recorded into an old boombox and are totally affected. Hmm.

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MIDNIGHT MOVIES

THE NATURAL AND THE UNEARTHLY SHARE SPACE WITH L.A.'S ELEGANT SURREALISTS.

WORDS: ALEXANDER POSELL PHOTO: MARC GOLDSTEIN

During the day, the modern world and its straight lines prevail—money and machines, time and technology, order and organization... but after dark, the winds of the imagination come into play. In the middle of the night, strange creatures appear, unusual events occur, familiar objects take on new aspects, the real becomes the ethereal.

Like a story told in the late hours, the music on *Midnight Movies*' self-titled debut conjures these dreamlike images—autumn mists at twilight, hazy, multi-shaded tableaux, psychedelic colors and shapes. Their name comes from a book about '60s-era underground films, and it fits perfectly with their spacey, kaleidoscopic sound. Far from presenting some sort of contrived image, however, the band's style comes simply from a natural ease between its members. Having met through musicians' wanted ads, they originally got together as a group of six, but quickly whittled themselves down to three whose visions and aesthetics aligned effortlessly.

Midnight Movies is a first for two of its members—drummer/singer Gena Olivier and keyboardist/guitarist Jason Hammons had never been in serious bands before, having both previously been involved in electronic projects. Their prior experi-

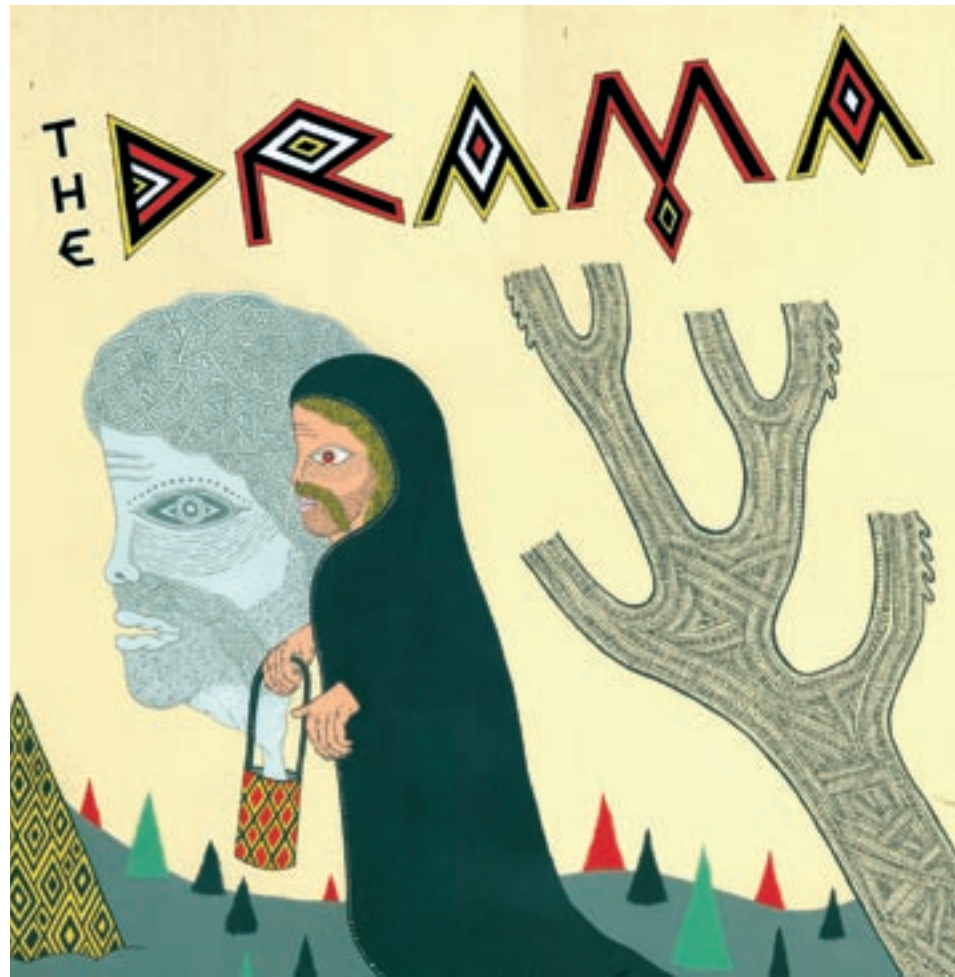
ence makes itself plain on the album, as Hammons' pulsating synth tones and lush keyboard landscapes blend seamlessly with Olivier's vocals and Larry Schemel's reverberating guitars. The result? A moving, hauntingly ethereal cult thriller soundtrack that is as palpably vibrant on record as it is on stage.

Their conspicuous live presence has helped contribute to the buzz surrounding the band—Hammons plays with a laptop but, preferring to keep the human element as tangible as possible, uses almost no sequences. Schemel tackles his instrument like a man on a mission, and the sight of Olivier crooning in her eerie tone while briskly pounding her kit is both electrifying and exhilarating.

Though the music itself is otherworldly, the process by which it comes about is surprisingly natural. The band members, in their own words, don't "try" to write music, they simply allow the songs to come into being. Schemel says the songs can come from anything: "...other music, dreams, art—we'll all write parts and kind of flesh out the idea. It's like we're creating this little creature."

Midnight Movies is available now on Emperor Norton/Rykodisc. www.midnightmovies.net

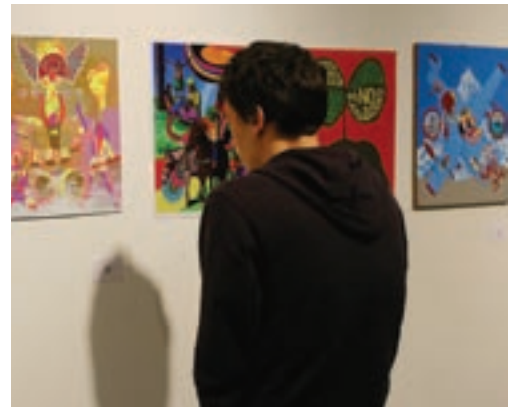
Midnight Movies: Larry Schemel, Jason Hammons, and Gena Olivier



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Virginia is for lovers,
and artists too.

"The Drama goes way back, so far back I can't remember," shares Joel Speasmaker, the founder and creative director of the Richmond, VA outfit with the suitably melodramatic name. Founded in 2000 as **a collective of likeminded underground Virginian artists**, The Drama's core seven members (who now live all over the country) organize art shows and run an online store, as well as publish a totally awesome art and design magazine. Issue six of the zine (also called *The Drama*) was recently released, which features work from Wes Lang, Ron Rege Jr., Harrison Haynes, and Brian Roettinger of Hand Held Heart/Dim Mak; past issues of the \$6 tome (available through the website and at independent bookstores worldwide) have highlighted heavyweights such as Commonwealth Stacks, Typevsm, and Isaac Lin. "One of our biggest goals has always been to make each section of the magazine as equally important as another," says Speasmaker, "so it's almost like you are reading a book or a story as you go through the issue." Of course an unintended goal of The Drama's growing popularity is to make Richmond a future stop for visual art tourists and avant-hipsters. If you go, Speasmaker recommends "First Fridays, Bell Isle, Carytown, The Bottom and Tobacco Row, and walking around the Fan." *Tyra Bangs*
www.thedrama.org, www.thedramastore.org

The Drama issue 4 cover; *The Drama Presents: A to Z* at Ada Gallery, April 2005 (pictured: work by Maya Hayuk, Yuko Kondo, Katsuo Design, and Helge Ruemann); Travis Robertson, assistant editor of *The Drama*, and Joel Speasmaker, founder and creative director



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BATTLES

FOUR-STRING SLINGERS WHO DON'T DO THE MATH. WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD PHOTO: PAUL O'VALLE

Battles pencils in rock and roll so pristine and mathematically precise that a slight breeze might shatter it. Each guitar note, microtone, and beat is fixed like leaves on a tree branch that break off and continue the music as they skitter down the sidewalk. Just don't call the New York quartet "math rock."

"Is it fair to call a chef salad with a multitude of ingredients 'lettuce?'" quips guitarist Tyondai Braxton. Battles does not play songs as much as they concoct loops, with three guitars blurring their simple parts into a grand argument. The instrumental band's excursions range from mechanical trance-rock to noise-loop experiments that flow like amniotic fluid in the womb.

"The effect of it all could still add up to something that was complicated, but I wanted the phrases to be simple," guitarist Ian Williams says. "From what I read about the band, people don't always see it that way, but what you aim for and what you are aren't always the same thing."

Battles, originally christened Abomination Restitution, formed in New York in 2002 when solo guitarist Braxton bounced ideas off of Williams (of Storm & Stress and Don Caballero fame). Guitarist David Konopka (Lynx), and heavyweight champion drummer John Stanier (Helmet, Tomahawk) later figured in. "The thing is [that] everyone in the band has a strong musical background already, so as far as that is concerned, we all knew the ingredients,"

Braxton details. "It was just a matter of rehearsing and writing to see what would sift to the bottom."

Earlier this year, Battles toured the States with Scott Herren (Prefuse 73), who later joined them for an encore at the Sonar Festival in Barcelona. Braxton mentioned that Herren defended his honor at a Florida gig by throwing his sandwich and a fist at a drunk who tried to strangle Braxton. The poor victim later counter-attacked a UK heckler who hated on his The Fall shirt. "Well, we're a seminal British band and if you're from Britain, you should be kissing my ass right now," Braxton recalled lying.

As for Battles' more peaceful side, their record covers typically strike the eye with simple, wordless photographs of pastoral fields and trees, heightening the band's mystique. "The photos are really beautiful and that is the statement in itself," Braxton said. "There is a sense of neutrality in the way we build our music and [we] wanted that same sense with our visuals. It lends itself to multiple interpretations."

Battles' *B*, *C*, and *Tras*, *Fantasy* EPs are out now on Dim Mak, Monitor, and Cold Sweat, respectively. www.btls.com

Battles: Ian Williams, John Stanier, Tyondai Braxton, and David Konopka



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SILVER ANNIVERSARY SKANK
From Kingston to Queens, a new DVD tells the story of VP Records.



Spragga Benz and Tanya Stephens live at the VP Records 25th Anniversary Concert, Miami

Founded by a former jukebox record stocker—and situated in Jamaica, Queens—VP Records is now a hugely successful reggae label and distribution business. They've helped break Sean Paul, Bounty Killer, and Elephant Man to the American pop market, while maintaining their hardcore following via 7" and riddim album releases. What people may not know are the business's humble origins back at 17 North Parade Road in downtown Kingston, Jamaica. Or how political and social upheaval in the late '70s drove founders Vincent and Patricia Chin to explore opportunities in the US. **VP Records 25th Anniversary Concert: Live In Miami** (VP Records, \$24) offers both concert clips from their star roster (Tanya Stephens, Sanchez, T.O.K., Beres Hammond) in addition to an informative, well-produced 45-minute documentary about VP from the '60s ska era to the present. VP America co-founder Clive Chin, son of Vincent, talked with *XLR8R* about what the business has accomplished in a quarter century. Read his comments at www.xlr8r.com. *Tomas Palermo*
www.vprecords.com

PERMANENT WAVE

A design conference so fresh it will make your hair curl.

When it launched in 2002, the Semi-Permanent design conference—curated by online magazine/portal *Design Is Kinky*—made everyone jealous they didn't live in Sydney, Australia. But this fall, the little design conference that could will journey from the land of wallabies to the home of 50-cent franks and papayas. **Semi-Permanent NYC 2005** (held September 9-10 at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall) will feature events and lectures with a worldly group of unusual suspects from art and design. Interactive guru Joshua Davis from Praystation will rep hard, as will *XLR8R* contributor and 19-year-old

boy genius Chuck "NoPattern" Anderson. Lobo and The Orphanage (behind the fx for *Superman Returns* and *Sky Captain*) are on hand for motion graphics tips, t-shirt company Threadless and French graf writer Fafi will discuss inspirations, and NYC's art and fashion stalwarts Visionaire (of publishing and gallery fame) will explain how it all gets done. Aside from sheer, giddy inspiration, Semi-Permanent attendees also get to take home a 240-page design book with work culled from the presenters. *Tyra Bangs*
www.semipermanent.com



Mac User by NoPattern

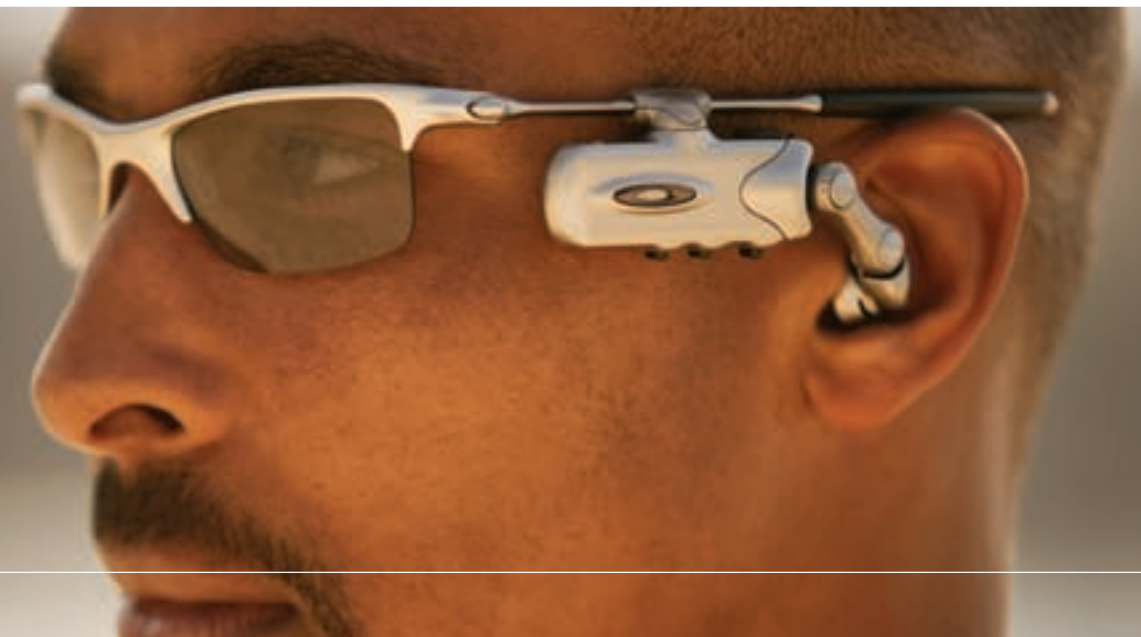


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WORDS: TOMAS PALERMO PHOTO: MITCH

enjoy singing, and I don't think it's fair for people to pigeon-hole me," Biggs explains.

Vocally, Biggs incorporates the power of Chaka Khan with the grace of Patti Labelle. You can hear it on the wobbly Sticky-produced 2-step track "Things We Do" and on her latest funky house single with Fanatix, "Lesson Learned" (Osirus Records). The latter proves she can belt out vocal house as good as Martha Wash or any of the major divas. "I tend to write about love a lot," she explains, "'cause I think its something that everyone can understand. I don't think there's enough love in the world. [The songs] are my way of subliminally touching people."

Biggs took time while getting out her record contract to launch a clothing label called Funkin Bitch ("My mum's a designer, so I've always made my clothes from quite young") and to assemble her next album, which spans rock, soul, funk, and electronic genres. "Out here in the UK, [the varied styles] are causing me a problem 'cause people are like, 'Well, you know, it doesn't have a theme.' Why does it need a theme? I like to sing, and these are songs," she says tersely.

The first track, "Naked," from the unreleased album (working title: *Kelepy*) is making the rounds on white label. Produced by Denmark's Maximum Risk, the song blends her explosive soul vox with organic elements—banjo, live flute, and bongos. "The problem in this country is that it doesn't sound like anything they've heard from America, whereas when I went to America [and played it for labels] they were like, 'Yeah, we love it.'"

Maybe Biggs, a huge fan of eclectic Americans Andre 3000 and Gwen Stefani, will soon find a home for her music on these fair shores. The talent is there, along with the drive she's shown time and again. "I've achieved so much," she muses, "but I'll never be satisfied because I'll always want to take it to the next level."

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Röyksopp: Torbjørn Brundtland and Svein Berge (Camille Vivier)

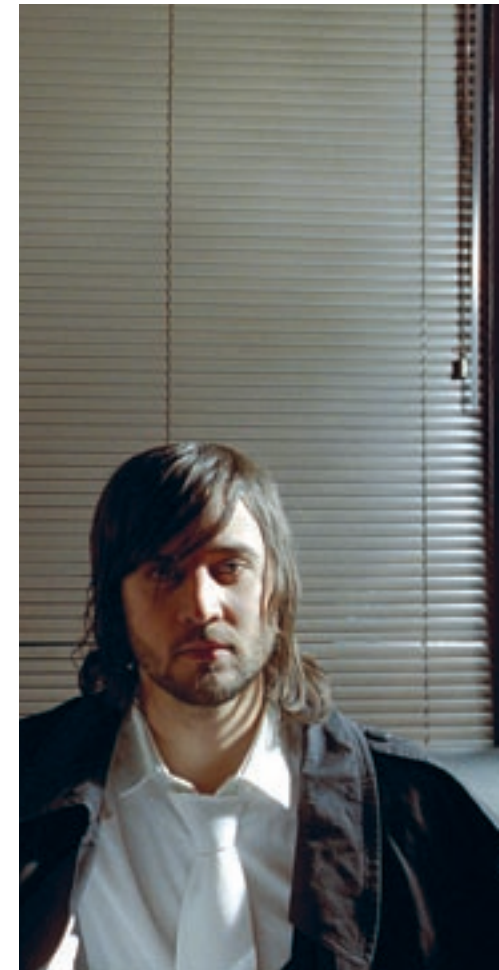
OBSESSIONS: RÖYKSOPP

Norwegian electronic popsters find their passion in colored pulp.

Talking to Röyksopp's tow-headed Torbjørn Brundtland and bearded Svein Berge is like wandering through a densely overgrown forest—comments meander off the beaten path, sometimes rejoining the trail of thought five minutes later, sometimes never at all. It's similar to listening to their music, where skeins of electro, softly woven synths, and tender vocals tiptoe through airy, pulsating backgrounds of chilled out Euro-pop—the journey as the destination. On July 12, the duo released *The Understanding*, their follow-up to 2001's lauded *Melody A.M.* Though they were vague about the album—except to say that it's a more vocal affair—these surreal superheroes were happy to talk about the influence comic books have had on them. *Tyra Bangs*
www.royksopp.com, www.astralwerks.com

Röyksopp on comics

"Comics [have] been part of us ever since we were kids. We started with [Swedish comic] *Bamse* (pronounced "bum-suh"), which is a nice story of a bear-like creature who has to eat special honey to become very strong. We also like Robert Crumb, Dave Cooper at Fantagraphics, and Carl Barks, who drew Donald Duck. And Jim Woodring; he's just released something in the form of a children's book about a small animal called Trosper, a cute mini-elephant. It's not splatter-type horror but I would hesitate more to show this to my potential kid than to show them a horror movie. It's like a David Lynch *Eraserhead* kind of dark. The nice thing about comics is that it doesn't take that much resources to make a good one. If you have an idea for the best science fiction movie in the world—say 10 times better than *Star Wars*—and there's no way that you can become a big Hollywood director with a huge budget, you can still make a cartoon and share these ideas. Comic books [are so appealing] because they don't have limitations."



TURBULENCE

A CULTURAL SINGJAY RISES TO NOTORIOUS STATUS.

WORDS: SARAH BENTLEY PHOTO: PETER DEAN "AFFLICTED" RICKARDS



"Let me tell you this again, I could have been one of the most notorious/I got saved by the king, and his grace is so glorioooooos." If you're a follower of dancehall, you couldn't have missed the rallying tones of Turbulence's inimitable "Notorious" single. Voiced on the Scallawah riddim—a fresh hip-hop tinged b-line with a penetrating electric guitar riff from new Jamaican collective THC Muzik—Turbulence's militantly righteous singing/deejaying makes this a street anthem for rastas, big men, and rude bwoys alike.

The track's hard-hitting video narrative depicts Turbulence and his Higher Trod backing crew preparing to bury alive an enemy when they unearth a Kebra Negast African Bible, which causes them to rethink their actions. Of the video Turbulence says, "When you're moving through the ghetto every day you get tough. It's easy to get caught up. We show the youths no matter who disrespect you, Jah is the only judgement."

Although it was the rawness of "Notorious" that catapulted Turbulence to top status, he varies his style from gruff deejaying to melodic singing. For example, his latest album on VP, *Songs Of Solomon*, is a classic culture album. "The most important thing in life is love," confesses Turbulence. "*Songs of Solomon* educates with no bigotry or racism, just unification, upliftment, and reality."

Born Sheldon Campbell in Hungry Town, Kingston, Jamaica, the 25-year-old has been a music man since his school days. "It's my calling," he says of the artform. Like most up-and-coming artists Turbulence struggled to get his first break—his skills as a deejay and singer confused the island's producers. Eventually Phillip Fattis Burrell, production don of Exterminator Records, spotted his potential and the two have worked together since, with Burrell producing two albums, *Hail To The King* and *Rising*.

Turbulence is different from the current school of popular culture artists: Ritchie Spice, I-Wayne, Jah Cure, and previously reigning Boboshanti-dread dancehall artists like Capleton and Sizzla. He is righteous but streetwise, earthy but cool. He cruises around Kingston with his Higher Trod crew all on motorbikes. He wears a tam and Africa pendant with coordinating brand-name streetwear. For his debut UK performance supporting Sizzla, he wore a shirt and patterned necktie with army fatigues. And now his music reflects his hybrid sartorial style, as well as his huge potential for crossing over into an MTV-obsessed urban fan base.

Of this comparison Turbulence laughs. "Yes, me always like to mix it up," he says. "My original name was Double Trouble—come two-styles. It was an elderly ras that named me Turbulence—disturbing to Babylon, electrifyingly strong. I'm rasta but I love de street vibes. I want to see myself on BET, MTV. Some artists burn them but that's where I see myself, for real."

"Notorious" is featured on the *Scallawah Riddim* LP on THC Muzik/Crisis. Turbulence's *Songs Of Solomon* LP is out now on VP Records. www.vprecords.com

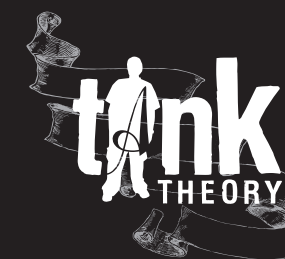


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- 10/17-Baltimore, MD
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- 10/19-Chapel Hill, NC
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- 11/9-Salt Lake City, UT
- 11/10-Denver, CO
- 11/11-Lawrence, KS
- 11/12-Columbia, MO
- 11/13-Madison, WI
- 11/14-Minneapolis, MN
- 11/15-Minneapolis, MN

*some dates may be subject to change.



COLOSSUS

A LONDON GIANT PLANTS BEANSTALKS IN THE BAY AREA.

WORDS: TOPH ONE PHOTO: SELF-PORTRAIT

Back in 2002, the Bay Area became home to a 6'8" Londoner named Charlie Tate, one half of the veteran jazzfunk/ drum&bass duo King Kooba and former bass player with Neneh Cherry's band. After four King Kooba albums for Second Skin and Om Records, Tate settled into the Oakland lifestyle like a soft couch. He started the laid-back weekly club night Slow Gin with Om's PR man Gunnar Hissam (a.k.a. The Trout) and began cultivating friendships with old time blues players, new school MCs, and the fine folks at Kingman's Lucky Lounge near Oakland's Lake Merritt district.

"At one of my Slow Gin evenings there was an impromptu open mic session where I met emcees Regi B and Delphi," says Tate, who has since relocated back to the UK. "Also around this same time I was producing the first Colossus tracks and making contacts with people such as [emcee/singers] Capitol A and Azeem. Before I knew it, my idea of harnessing some of the Bay Area's favorite artists in one colossal package was on."

After returning to London in 2004 and recording some tracks with Rodney Smith (a.k.a. Roots Manuva), the Colossus debut *West Oaktown* was finally complete—or so we thought. For Tate, it still wasn't enough: "I

decided to remix the entire record... I'm not sure why—it just seemed like a good idea at the time. [But now] you get two records for the price of one! For no other reason than that I wanted to!"

Lucky for us. Disc one (also available on double vinyl) is a jazzed out excursion reminiscent of those lazy, stoney Thursday nights at Slow Gin. Disc two is geared towards the clubs—or at the very least a sweaty pub on a busy night out. The first 12" features two of the most jumping tracks—"The Tribute" and "Thripney Bits"—remixed by J-Boogie, Strange Fruit Project, and DJ Zeph. And after years of support gigs with legends such as James Brown and Roy Ayers, Tate is forming the Colossus band, with Tate himself on bass, cats on drums, Rhodes and turntables, and MCs Azeem, Delphi, Regi B, and Capitol A. Expect a tour of the US later this summer with possible European dates toward the end of the year—a big 2005 for the big man from London with a head full of Oaktown funk.

Colossus' debut album is out October 11 on Om Records.
www.om-records.com



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ON THE SPOT: SONAR 2005

The masses speak out at one of Europe's most celebrated summertime electronic gatherings.

Words and photos: Philip Sherburne www.sonar.es



PETER FRANCIS (London/Barcelona)

Years at Sonar: 1 **Best thing about Sonar:** There are so many different places within the festival to explore—so many different fields and energies. **Worst thing about Sonar:** People stepping over you when you're lying down enjoying the music.



ELLEN ALLIEN (Berlin)

Years at Sonar: 6 **Best thing about Sonar:** Meeting so many international artists and distributors, and seeing special live acts you've never seen before—every year is a surprise. **Worst thing about Sonar:** Mmm...the line for the toilets.



GRAHAM (Brighton)

Years at Sonar: 3 **Best thing about Sonar:** I was impressed with the Friday daytime programming, and with all the genres and microgenres that co-exist together. **Worst thing about Sonar:** There aren't enough food stalls—and the overlapping acts could be better timed.



ANNA HARTZ (Belfast)

Years at Sonar: 2 **Best thing about Sonar:** The scale—knowing that there are this many creative minds all in one place. **Worst thing about Sonar:** Honestly, I even like the toilet queues—only here at geekfest are the men's lines actually longer than the women's.



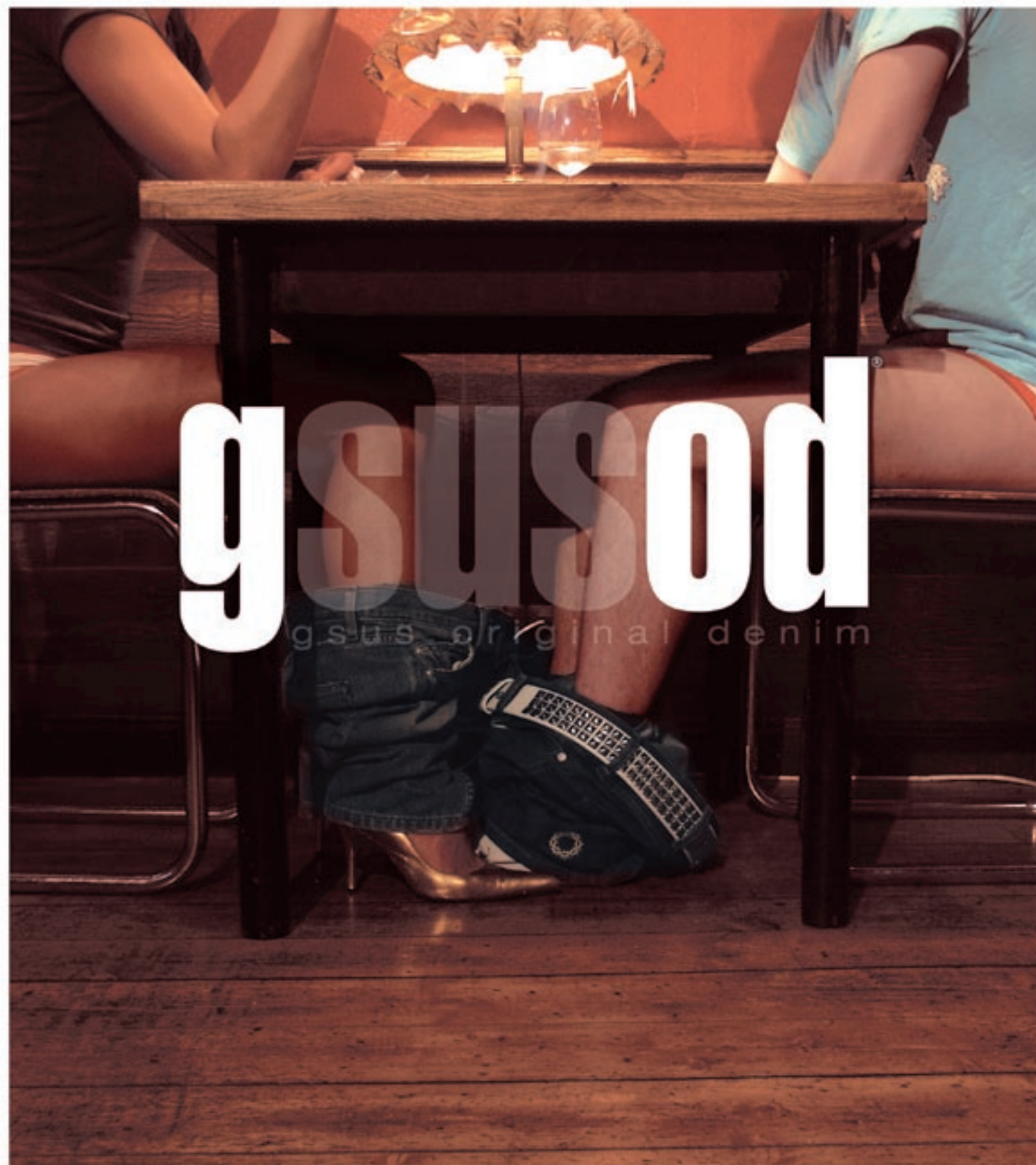
SHEILA SPREV RUNDAR & ANIBAL FERNANDEZ MUÑOZ (Barcelona)

Years at Sonar: 4 & 1 **Best thing about Sonar:** The magic, the experimental sounds, and the people. **Worst thing about Sonar:** The prices and the beer.



CECILIA AMENABAR (Buenos Aires)

Years at Sonar: 4 **Best thing about Sonar:** The conjunction of so many different kinds of artists that you simply can't see in Latin America. **Worst thing about Sonar:** The lineup is getting weaker in recent years—and there aren't enough artists from Latin America.



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JON CUTLER

A RISING STAR PUTS THE "CLASS" IN CLASSIC HOUSE.

WORDS: ROB GEARY PHOTO: SELF-PORTRAIT

Brooklyn has always loved to dance, whether it's disco, hip-hop, rock, or the sometimes-ignored streak of house in the borough. DJ and producer Jon Cutler belongs in the last camp, spinning smooth-yet-relentless deep house that calls to mind the soulful, funky disco that spanned the city in the '70s. While his 12", "It's Yours," is a bona fide house classic—still getting played three years on and even mashed up with Usher's "Yeah" by an anonymous white-label bandit—Cutler came to house almost by chance.

"I hung out in all the clubs, I knew all the guys there who kept pushing me towards the house side," he recalls. "I was doing some DJ stuff in the neighborhood and it went from there. I was playing everything back in the day—hip-hop, reggae, all that stuff. When I started doing the production in '96, I just started running towards house."

Cutler's love of house manifested itself in his Distant Music label, formed the same year he got behind the mixing desk. The label's been quiet in the past year as Cutler engaged in jet-set touring and released 12"s for labels like

Nervous and Milk 'N 2 Sugars; no fear, Distant's now on its 30th release and back with a banging compilation called *Planet*. And the excitement of dropping his own tunes in his trademark diva-laced mixes has got Cutler back in the swing of production. "It's a love and hate thing with traveling," he confesses. "But the thing with DJing [is] when you run into a guy where you know his records, you just always seem to hit it off. There's a family community in it. Now I know the majority of the [international DJs and producers] around the world, and the ones I don't, when we play together it just takes like a half an hour before you're bonding."

When DJs congregate, the talk naturally turns to records old and new and Cutler flies the flag of the '70s, both in the mellow keys and soul vocals shot through his tunes and the dusty vinyl on his stereo. "I try to bring the most pumped stuff but still on a soulful vibe," he explains. "I still haven't gone past the point of just totally banging it out. I listen to all the '70s stuff: Barry White, Crown Heights Affair, Chic. I was always drawn toward them—[but now it's] for different purposes—for arrangements. Beat-wise, I'm always listening to the classics."

Planet: A Distant Music Compilation is out now. www.distantusa.com



MOBIUS BAND TOUR DIARY

It's mullets in Montana and gin in Minnesota for a Ghostly band on the road.

Though the three-piece Mobius Band formed in rural Massachusetts, these Brooklyn transplants don't embrace the folksy, rustic aesthetic that runs rife in the indie set. Their new album on Ghostly, *The Loving Sounds of Static*, is lovely electronic pop. And like The Shins or Postal Service, singer Ben Sterling's voice is as clear and memorable as his bandmates' (Peter Sax and Noam Schatz) chords and percussion. Mobius Band gave us this backstage pass.

www.mobiusband.com, www.ghostly.com



Noam Schatz, Peter Sax, Ben Sterling

JUNE 3: PORTLAND, OR

11-hour drive from San Francisco to Portland. Tonight is a big radio station show with the Kaiser Chiefs. Everything goes as planned until Peter is caught stealing Kaiser beers. The band is nice and only asks us to return the Pilsner Urquells to the deli tray. **Kaisers don't like Red Stripe.**



JUNE 5: MISSOULA, MT

We are lost and end up getting directions at a serious mullet bar, a real life version of the *Deer Hunter* videogame—sawdust on the floor, Nugent on the stereo, and grimaces all around. **This is the kind of town with a \$1 hamburger 'n PBR special.** Everyone is accommodating, though the elderly soundman retires early at the bar and his "apprentice" (read: weed dealer) works the board, so our set is accompanied by a low feedback moan something akin to whalesong.



JUNE 7: MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Early load-in for a radio set at KCMP means no sleep for Mobius Band. Met up with Ghostly's own Huntley Miller (a.k.a. Cepia) at the station, who spends his days archiving Garrison Keillor and dreaming of plug-ins. Not much action at the gig, though **Minneapolis wins the award for the strongest gin and tonics of the tour.**



JUNE 9: DETROIT, MI

Fun show later with the lovely ladies of Electrelane. Heat, humidity, and stage lights mean **Mobius Band loses 10 pounds in sweat during our short set.** Electrelane rock with extreme prejudice and don't appear anywhere near as sweaty.



JUNE 11: NEW YORK, NY

It's a good, albeit humid, night with friends and lovers coming out of the woodwork. That said, **The Winter Pageant blows us out of the water.** Don't sleep on them. After loading out of the Knit, loading back in to our practice space, negotiating the non-negotiable freight elevator, returning the rental van, and cabbing it home (plus a three-hour drive to Massachusetts for Noam), it's back to our own beds as the sun is coming up.



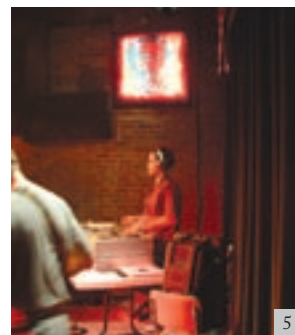
I miss the old New York



SPIN CYCLE

News and gossip from the music world

The king of soul, crooner **Luther Vandross**, passed away July 1 due to complications brought on by a stroke the singer suffered in 2003. He was 54. Pioneering rocksteady and reggae producer **Clancy Eccles** has died at 64 from diabetes. In addition to being one of Jamaica's most important producers, Eccles was involved in the election of socialist prime minister Michael Manley, recorded early tracks for Bob Marley, and cut the first record by romantic crooner Beres Hammond. Washinton DC's **Q and Not U** is disbanding after seven years and numerous singles and albums. The band's statement said "We've reached all of our shared goals as Q and Not U and we're ready to move on to other projects in life." **Giant Step** kicked off its 15-Year Anniversary at Central Park SummerStage on Sunday July 17th with a free concert featuring Femi Kuti, Brazilian Girls, the original Giant Step DJ, Smash, plus DJ Nickodemus. Celebrations will continue in October with a month of special events. Check www.giantstep.net. Joining digital download spots like Kompakt mp3, Beatport, and Beathut is **Dancetracksdigital** (www.dancetracksdigital.com) and **Ghostly International's** new micro-store (www.buyghostly.com). The seventh annual **Iceland Airwaves** music festival is scheduled to rock Reykjavik October 19-23, 2005. Confirmed acts include The Fiery Furnaces, Zoot Woman, High Contrast (DJ set), Annie, and The (International) Noise Conspiracy plus loads of Icey hots like Gus Gus. **DJ Muggs** has joined forces with LA hip-hop duo **Self-Scientific** to form Angeles Records via Fontana Distribution (part of Universal Music Group). Initial releases will include DJ Muggs vs. GZA and Change—one of LA's most talented but underexposed groups. Former Micranots member **I Self Divine's** new album, *Self Destruction*, drops late September on Rhymesayers. **Kajmere Sound Distribution** has some exclusive hip-hop, funk,



and soul releases like **DJ Center's** *Feel What I'm Feeling* double-CD (with Pharoahe Monch & SA-RA, Raheem DeVaughn, and The Last Poets), also **Aspirin/Bambouche's** "Revolution" 7" (reviewed in Future Jazz this issue). Check www.ksdmusic.com. **Blackalicious** is set to release their long awaited fifth full-length studio album, *The Craft*, September 27, on **Anti Records**. The Supreme Court of the United States unanimously ruled that **Grokster** and **Streamcast** may be held accountable if their programs induce consumers to illegally exchange copyrighted works. For a thorough synopsis check www.futuremusic.com. Shaman Work Recordings has signed Pete Rock's main collaborator, **C.L. Smooth**. The label's roster includes artists Sol Uprising, Scienz of Life, MF Doom, Ta'Raach, and Wale Oyejide. See www.shamanwork.com. **Public Nylon** is the new radio show from Mantis Recordings on Samurai FM, hosted by Atjazz, Andy Mantis, and Nick Morley and featuring new tracks from Atjazz and Clyde, live recordings from The Collectors and a new remix of Phil Parnell from **Matthew Herbert**. www.samurai.fm **Animal Collective's** new album, *Feels*, drops on Fat Cat Records October 4. Native Instruments should have version 3 of their **Traktor** digital DJ software out by Christmas while rival **Serato Scratch Live** will probably be updated by the end of the year. Hilarity, hip-hop, and local SF club events can be found at www.illstatic.com. Last time we checked they had the skinny on live shows featuring 2Mex, Shapeshifters, Röyksopp, The Go! Team, Sir Mix-A-Lot, and others, plus the side-splitting **Club Bitch** gossip column. **GoFish** Search-by-Lyrics is the first search engine tool that allows people who know just a word of a seemingly unrecognizable and unidentifiable song to find it. www.gofish.com Check out downloads, music clips, and daily news updates at www.xlr8r.com

1. Q And Not U; 2. Blackalicious; 3. Four Tet performing at Iceland Airwaves, 2004; 4. Matthew Herbert (Helen Woods); 5. DJ Center; 6. Luther Vandross.

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1996 - 2005: 10 years of ade

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Hearts of Darkness

Getting into trouble with electro punks Adult.
WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTOS: NICOLA KUPERUS





Adult. once said they made uncomfortable music. How fitting then, that I have just taken them to the most uncomfortable place on earth: New York's Museum of Sex. And now I'm standing next to Adam Lee Miller, Nicola Kuperus, and their new bandmate—Tamion 12-inch guitarist Sam Consiglio—in a darkened room punctuated by canned male laughter and smacking sex sounds. Nicola and I are paused next to a screen flickering with an image of two men jacking each other off, while I feign interest in the accompanying text about this history of pornography. After what seems like an eternity—but is only really a minute and a half—Sam darts over and breaks the silence. “All I hear over here is shame,” he says pointedly, waving his hand toward the video.

I thought this place would have appropriately weird curiosities like shrunken pygmy penises in jars or the world's first dildo, but the overall feel is of a sleazy adult bookstore—the exhibits include a re-creation of a gay man's entertainment center from the '80s (complete with lube and hair remover), a sex chair controllable via the internet, a porn flick called *New Wave Hooker*, and lots and lots of naked shlongs. I'm half expecting Adam or Nicola—who have written songs bemoaning “touching things touched by others”—to bolt to the bathroom for a bout of obsessive-compulsive handwashing.

Nonetheless, all three gamely proceed through the museum, pausing the longest in front of Real Doll, a life-sized sexual aid designed to look and feel like a real woman. As all four of us take turns feeling on a pair of breasts made out of lifelike silicone, Adam explains that Nicola once considered buying a Real Doll for her photographs—elaborately staged Hitchcockian tableaux that grace the covers of their Ersatz Audio singles—but declined when she found out the nearly \$7,000 price tag. “Looking at it up close they have all these seams and stuff,” he muses. “It's good we didn't buy one.”

CATCHERS IN THE WRY

It appears Adult. has loosened up a lot in eight years. In their early days, Adam and Nicola (Sam was added to the line-up last year) came across as two chillingly clinical, at times angry, electro robots, an image reinforced by tense live shows and stark, blank-eyed press photos. When you meet them in person, you realize the photos aren't a shtick—with their penchant for all-black outfits, angular hair, and stop-start sentences, the members of Adult. are like the weird kids at some record store in the late '80s, the kind who used to slip Dead Kennedys records into the Debbie Gibson sleeves. As you'd expect, they are also much nicer and more personable than robots.

Initially, the couple—art school grads who met in Detroit in 1997—served up dystopian takes on Kraftwerk's shiny future on singles like “Dispassionate Furniture” and “Nausea”; these themes that continued through 2001's *Resuscitation* (a collection of early singles) and 2003's *Anxiety Always*. Though their April mini-album *D.U.M.E.* and their new full-length, *Gimmie Trouble* (to be released on Chicago indie Thrill Jockey), still find them soundtracking the anomie of the 2000s with wry, dark humor, they've become more outgoing in approach. There's just a lot more to Adult. these days—more band members, more guitars, more angst, and more of Nicola's Siouxie & The Banshees-inspired caterwauling above analog voodoo beats and angular post-punk rhythms. Those expecting them to save elec-

“As soon as we collect
all our enemies, we'll
light the candle and
they'll die.”

—Adam Lee Miller

tro again might be sorely disappointed—parts of both records are suited for dancing...in goth clubs—but fans of the band's singular aesthetic will find plenty here that is quintessentially Adult.

“The one thing we've always had across the board is we take our own personal flaws—things like anxiety and social awkwardness—and sing about them,” says Adam when we finally duck out of the museum, through the monsoon-like New York rain and into an East Village café. “I think that's why people identify with us. I mean, nobody really gets up on stage and is like (sings) “*I'm socially awkward*”...but we do. [The difference is that on our previous albums] you had the person who is like ‘I'm awkward quiet’ and now you have the person who's like ‘I'm so nervous. Oh my god. Oh my god.’ And you listen to the album—the lyrics are like *bah-bah-bah* and the bass never stops and it's this nervous energy—it's still the same theme, just released in a different way.”

TROUBLED TIMES

Adult.'s newfound desire to tear down the barrier created by vocoders and monolithic synth lines is no doubt a reflection of the events of the last two years. Following the release of *Anxiety Always* on their own label, Ersatz Audio, they embarked on a grueling tour (20 shows in 26 days) and, despite actually being from Detroit, found themselves having to fend off the “electroclash” label. Nicola and Adam, who are married, bought a historic old house and built an attic studio in it where they would record *Gimmie Trouble*. Perhaps most surprisingly, they decided to divide the creative brain of Adult. into threes by working with guitarist Sam, who adds a rogue element of flamboyance to the pair's at times austere framework (what one

Russian journalist dubbed “librarian chic”). “I've never worked with anybody whose music was a more direct reflection of their personality than these two, that's for sure,” says Sam.

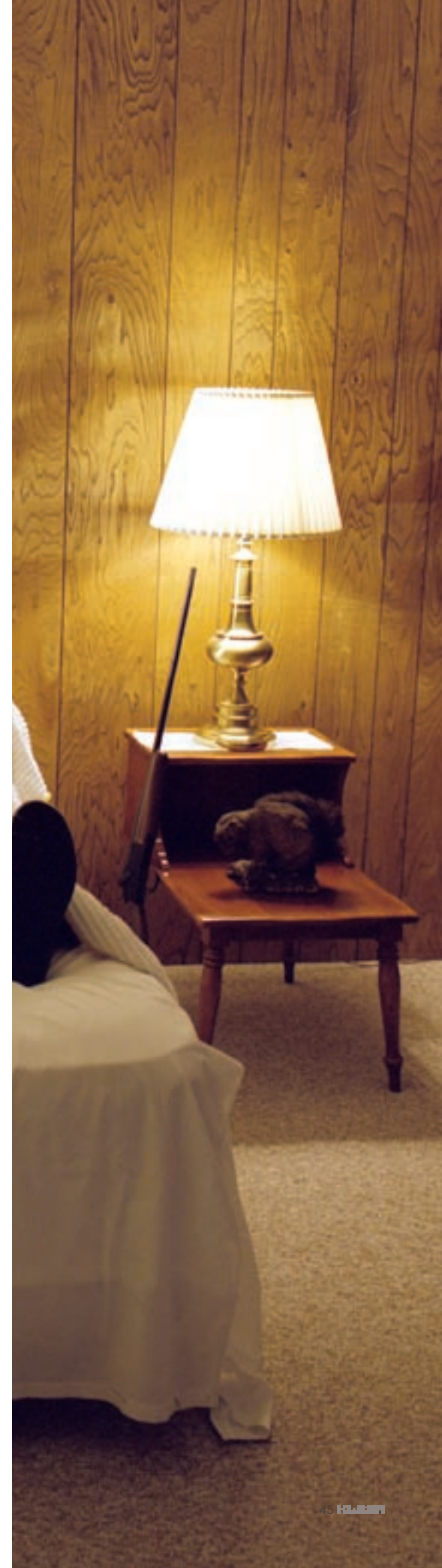
By all accounts, the process of making *Gimmie Trouble* was intense. “We calculated that we worked every day from January 2nd to April 4th, except for five days,” explains Adam of the band's restrictive recording schedule. “The first song we wrote was ‘Scare Up the Birds’ and it came out immediately. Then we had an 11-day dry spell—you're talking 10-12 hours a day where you're just coming up with like, a sketch, a little doodle.”

“And then I drank coffee and it happened,” says Nicola, laughing. “I mean, I've never been in any other band so I have no perspective. I assume most people don't just get together [like we do] and go, ‘Okay, we have a blank piece of paper here. Let's fill it up.’”

On prior albums, Nicola and Adam would go through and clean the house before recording, giving themselves a sort of pristine mental slate. That became impossible on *Gimmie Trouble*, as they were living in a place that Adam calls “totally destroyed.” Instead, the three worked out tensions by watching *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Strangers With Candy* and playing endless games of racquetball in an impromptu court they created. (“I would just like to state that I don't like jockiness and when we played racquetball it was not, like, real,” Adam is quick to mention. “Yeah,” concurs Nicola, “it was actually more like trying to inflict pain on anyone but yourself.”)

VOODOO YOU

Somewhere along the line, an album coalesced and was mixed in the two weeks Adult. had scheduled in between US and European tours for their six-





Adult.: Sam Consiglio, Adam Lee Miller, and Nicola Kuperus

track mini-album *D.U.M.E.*. Nicola says that *D.U.M.E.*—whose stand out tracks include a Christian Death-ish remix of “Don’t Talk” and the catchy death dirge “Hold Your Breath” (“*Hold your breath now/for a long time/hold your breath now/for a lifetime*”)—was intended as a way for audiences to catch up to their new sound. “It had been a long time since we had had a release and it was a way to kind of foreshadow that the times, they were a changin’,” she explains. “As for the goth club you hear,” adds Adam, “we were very conscious of that, thus the very over-the-top cover art and the name of it—*Death Unto My Enemies*. It’s from a voodoo candle. As soon as we collect all our enemies, we’ll light the candle and they’ll die.” He pauses with a sly smile. “We’re still working out the list though.”

Though they don’t name names, most of the content on both records is a sharp poke in the eye to their outspoken critics; *Gimmie Trouble* is both a mission statement and a description of what they’ve endured as they’ve tried to move away from their electro pigeonhole. “People are sometimes unhappy with change,” sighs Nicola. “They forget that as an artist you don’t want to repeat yourself—you want to grow and

you want to discover what else is in there. ‘*Gimmie Trouble*’ was written [based] on an email where some guy was like ‘You just really need to stay focused on dance music and electronic stuff and your roots. You need to get rid of the guitar and the bass.’”

“I was a punk kid who started in 1985 playing bass, so that would be my roots,” says Adam, frowning. “Besides that, there was bass on *Resuscitation* and guitar on *Anxiety Always*. You get these people who want you to sound like when they first heard you. What they don’t remember is that they liked us because we didn’t sound like everything else.”

“Adult. was such a good idea when it started,” Sam recalls. “It was like, look we’re not a rock band. Nicola wasn’t going to shout at you like she was in a rock band. But there’s a singer, so it was obvious [they] weren’t a techno band either. [They] were nothing.”

“I think our intent has always been to not be a part of anything,” explains Nicola. “We’ve always worked really hard to kind of not really know what we’re doing. And then everybody’s always like ‘You sound like an ‘80s band, you sound so retro.’ A lot of it is because we’re using keyboards from that time, but are you listening to them in the context of now and what we’re trying to do with them? We’re trying to pick up where it stopped and continue on. I think a lot of times people forget that.”

FASCINATION STREET

What Adult. is obsessing over right now

SAM

1. Tom of Finland
2. The artist Ray Johnson
3. The Smiths
4. Musical theatre
5. Seeing people get serious about impeaching Bush

ADAM

1. Larry David
2. Talking Heads
3. Oingo Boingo
4. Mexico
5. Reading about the forming of LA punk

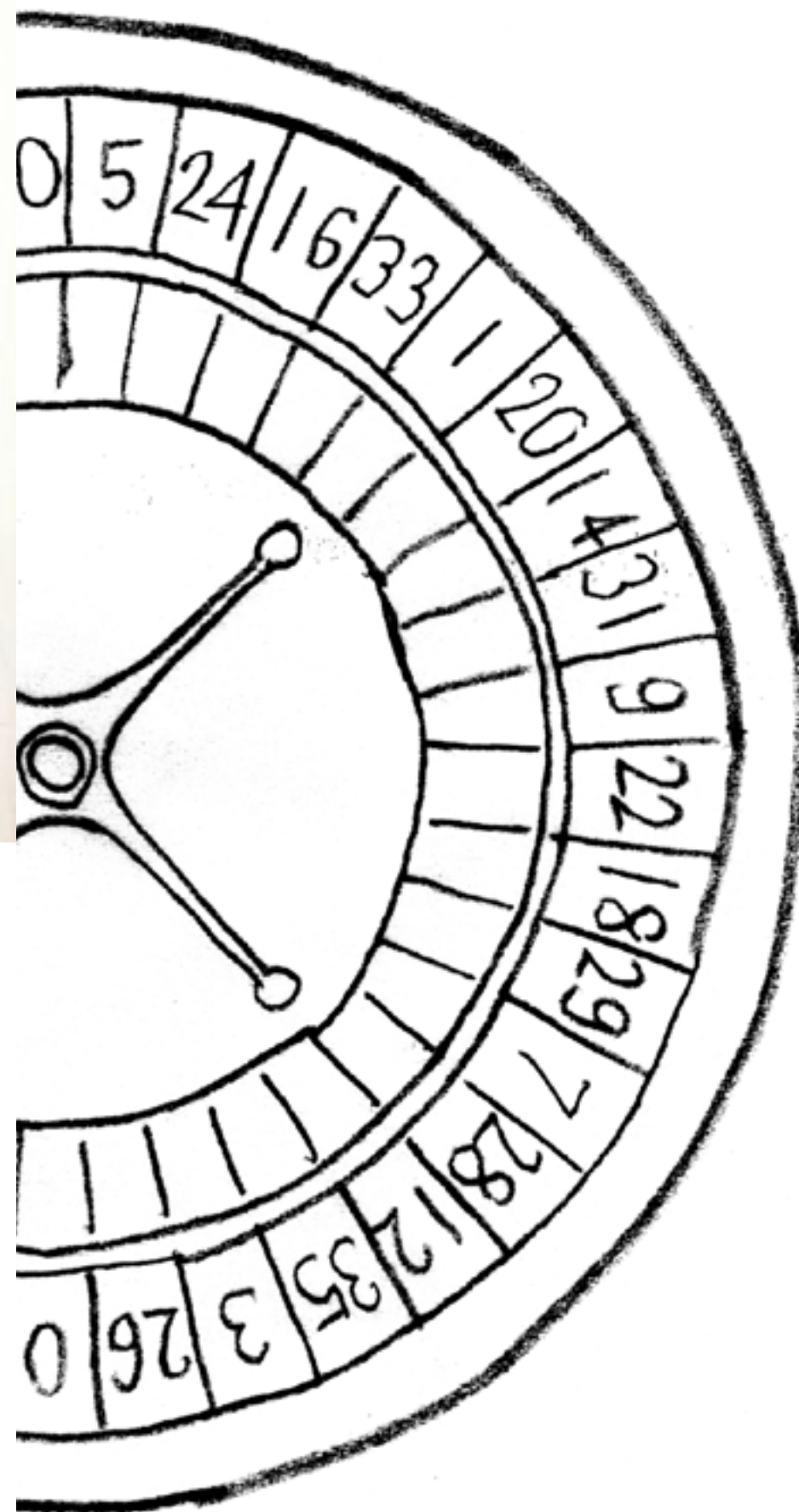
NICOLA

1. Finding the perfect pair of feather earrings
2. Classic cars
3. Trying to make more time to read books that I will inevitably fall asleep while reading
4. Wanting to fix my house
5. Helmut Newton

Gimmie Trouble is out October 11 on Thrill Jockey and Adult. will be touring to support the release in October.

www.adultperiod.net, www.thrilljockey.com

For more excerpts from the interview, see www.xlr8r.com.



“Unless a man is both able and prepared to see himself as others do; flaws and all; he will be a loser in cards, and in life.”



Disco Infernal

Four Norwegian producers reinvent a '70s staple.
WORDS: RAF KATIGBAK PHOTO: TOINI BLOM (RUNE LINDBAEK) AND
LIN STENSRUD (LINDSTRØM/THOMAS)

Pick up any travel brochure on Norway and they all talk about one thing: *fjords*. For some reason, these glacially carved inlets of water have come to define the country and its people: cool, distant, romantic. The same can be said of their music. Over the last decade, northern Norwegian downtempo and ambient acts from Biosphere to Röyksopp have invaded lounges and living rooms with the kind of isolated arctic coolness that could only have emerged from Scandinavia.

But lately there's been a rumbling coming from Oslo. What started as a spark has grown to a slow burn that's set to melt the icecaps. The sound is an unbridled blend of Detroit futurism driven by the rhythms of Krautrock; it's the sound of prog rock psychedelia colliding with echo-chambered dub effects; it's touches of Chicago acid, hip-hop, and Euro disco kitsch; it's the imaginary result of Ron Hardy jamming with Pink Floyd at the Paradise Garage. It's called Norwegian disko and everyone from DFA's James Murphy to Doc Martin to Trevor

Jackson has been jocking it.

While New Jersey's Metro Area were arguably the first to prove that disco could be more than just cheesy strings and horn stabs, Nordic producers like Lindstrøm, Prins Thomas, Rune Lindbaek, Kango's Stein Massiv, and Todd Terje are taking the genre deeper, dubbier, and further into the stratosphere on homegrown labels like Trailerpark, Beatservice, and Feedelity, as well as the UK's Bear Funk and the Brooklyn-based Modal Music.



Prins Thomas and Hans-Peter Lindstrøm

HANS-PETER LINDSTRØM

With a list of credits that includes dome-blowing remixes for LCD Soundsystem, The Juan Maclean, and Chicken Lips, Hans-Peter Lindstrøm is probably the most name-checked disko artist out of Norway right now. A relative newcomer to the Norwegian dance music scene, this self-professed shy guy and studio recluse caught the disco bug at an early age. "I was 10 years old and my first cassette I found on the street," remembers Lindstrøm. "It was a Boney M album, the one with the naked women on the cover and it's still one of my all-time favorites in terms of production." But Lindstrøm wasn't always so eager to share his disco passion. As a musically talented teen growing up on the rock 'n' roll dominated west coast of Norway, Lindstrøm had to keep his disco jones in check. "At the time I was playing keyboards in a heavy metal band," he recalls, "and they really made fun of me for the disco thing."

After trading in his keyboard for a guitar and moving from metal to Hank Williams-inspired country western, Lindstrøm followed his ear back to the sounds that moved him as a child, and relocated to Oslo. "Because of my background, I'm always trying to incorporate all the styles that I listen to all the time," he explains. "I play all the instruments myself—bass, guitar, drums, keyboards—so the songs get very personal. These days I'm not using any samples at all; everybody's using Reason and stuff and for me that's just not very personal. What I love about the disco style is that it's so versatile, it can be wonderfully avant-garde or really commercial."

Listen to any of the Lindstrøm remixes on the Norwegian disko comp *Prima Norsk 3* (Beatservice)—especially his collabs with fellow Norwegian Prins Thomas—and

it's clear that versatility is his mantra. For Lindstrøm and Thomas anything is fodder for inspiration, from mid-'80s Italian film soundtracks to Led Zeppelin and Hot Butter. Since they joined forces in 2003, the pair has been busy running their Oslo-based Feedelity records while sharing a studio in one of the sketchiest smack-infested neighbourhoods in Oslo.

PRINS THOMAS

Dubbed "The Remix King" by his peers, Prins Thomas is an avid record collector (half of his collection takes up much of his studio) who can trace his influence to the fertile early '80s disco nexus of Chicago and New York. "In the beginning, I was more into Larry Levan," muses Thomas. "When I first heard Ron Hardy I thought it sounded too... brutal. Now I'm just the opposite. I'm more interested in Hardy. I think it's important to take into consideration the limitations. I really believe that the most interesting music is made with limitations."

For Thomas—who gigs regularly in Europe and has a monthly radio show on with Lindstrøm on Tokyo's Shibuya FM—DJing and producing is all about taking chances. "David Mancuso came to a club in Norway and played [ethno-techno outfit] Deep Forest—which is one of the records I hate the most—and in the setting it sounded really, really good," he recalls. "It was hilarious. I actually started to laugh—like, it actually made sense! More and more I've been learning that you get the most satisfaction when you just trust your instincts. In production, [that means] you actually have the balls to go in a new direction, finding that cheesy melody and sticking with it rather than worrying that people won't like it. Or even doing a track at 140bpm that gets you excited—at least the



Rune Lindbaek

ballsiest people will play it, or maybe you can get a crossover hit with people that play gabber."

According to Thomas, there's something distinctly Norwegian about this style of freeform musical experimentation. "We're kind of independent here. It's never been a big scene—or most importantly, nobody's made much money with it—so nobody's hanging carrots in front of your face," he explains. "If you do it, it must be for the love."

RUNE LINDBAEK

Not to say that it's too tough surviving as an artist in Norway. Since the discovery of oil off the coast in the 1960s, Norway's economic prosperity has resulted in a generous welfare and artist support system. Veteran house producer Rune Lindbaek—whose releases on Paper Recordings helped pave the way for the current crop of Norwegian disko talent—believes that to be another reason for the fresh sounds coming from his country. "For three years in a row Norway has been voted the best place to live in the world according to the U.N.'s

human development index," explains Lindbaek. "There isn't the same money desperation here compared to somewhere like England and that affects the artists. Also, around here, the corporate money machine that sponsored clubs and parties has now taken on the rock scene; the noise around electronic music is disappearing, which is really a good thing. It's these middle periods, like those years just after disco, that are interesting. Post-disco was a reaction that had to happen and that's the way it should be."

KANGO'S STEIN MASSIV

With the recent collapse of the larger commercial club scene in Norway, the local underground scene is surging, and so is the output of producers like Kango of Kango's Stein Massiv. "Here even the good clubs are not really that good, but if the club scene in Oslo was really good, I wouldn't produce so much," explains the outspoken Kango. "If I moved to New York, I wouldn't produce. I'd want to just go out and buy records."

FROM NORWAY WITH LOVE

XLRR's Roy Dank guides you through Norwegian disko's most anthemic moments.

- 1. Kango's Stein Massiv "Tobakk"** (Trailerpark) Norway's demented disco disciple drops the rude bwoy bassline for a decidedly darker journey.
- 2. Lindstrøm "Jodelknappen"** from the *Plague The Kid EP* (Bear Entertainment) Lindstrøm's tuffest tune with an utterly insane FX session atop a heavy break.
- 3. Legotrip: "Ma Vi Stoppe? (Prins Thomas mix)"** (Glamfish) Prins Thomas flexes the nasty remix skills, dropping dubby disco goodness that eventually evolves into a rippin' acid number.
- 4. Lindstrøm "Limitations"** (Feedelity) As licensed by Chicken Lips for their *DJ-Kicks* comp, this slow burner is the one that put Lindstrøm on the map.
- 5. Lindbaek & Lindstrøm "Alien In My Pocket"** (Modal) The forefather of the Norwegian disko sound, Rune Lindbaek teams up with compatriot Lindstrøm for a sublime slice of cosmic disco.
- 6. Todd Terje "Bodies (Prins Thomas Orgasmatron)"** (Bear Funk) Anthem alert! Prins gets the crowd sweaty with this percussive disco funk number. Special bonus points for the cheeky Led Zep sample thrown in for good measure.
- 7. Kango's Stein Massive "Ferskfesk"** (Trailerpark) Holy acid, Batman! Kango heads into "big tune" territory with this epic 303 number.
- 8. Made in Hong Kong "Made in Hong Kong"** (Tamburin) Prins Thomas and the mysterious Professor Anarad drop this dub reggae number on Thomas' über-limited Tamburin imprint.
- 9. Lindstrøm "I Feel Space"** (Feedelity) Hypnotic is an understatement here. This could easily be the man's biggest tune yet.
- 10. Kohib "Truger"** from the *Prima Norsk 3* compilation (Beatservice) No idea who this Kohib character is, but this uptempo party jam rocks the dancefloor every time.

In fact, Kango—whose wild style productions wouldn't sound out of place on a late '70s/early '80s Lower East Side dancefloor—recently did just that. "When I went to A1 in New York two years ago I bought 187 disco records and the guy at the shop said, 'You Norwegians are really crazy about disco!'" But for Kango, doing what they do is the furthest thing from crazy. "We're all friends here: me, Thomas and Lindstrøm, Rune. We're all just having fun and we don't care what people think. In a way, you can really hear that in the production. Because we're not totally depending on the tracks the way that many people are, we can help each other out and experiment a lot more."

For more on Norwegian disko, check www.feedelity.com and www.beatservice.no.



Cunningham Man

Video director Chris Cunningham wants to be the best...at everything.

WORDS: PIERS MARTIN

Chris Cunningham is the award-winning film director who built Björk into a robot and morphed Madonna into a murder of crows. Best known for grafting Aphex Twin's head onto a gang of unruly kids and a bevy of bootylicious babes in the "Come To Daddy" and "Windowlicker" videos, in his latest work Cunningham has turned the camera on himself—with typically freakish results.

In the six-minute *Rubber Johnny*, his first new piece since 2000's art flick *Flex*, Cunningham used his own skinny naked body as the model for Johnny, a cellar-dwelling wheelchair-bound boy cursed with an abnormally large head and genitals. Shot on grainy grey-green night-vision DV and meticulously edited in time to Aphex Twin's *Drukqs* track "Afx 237v.7," the short catches naughty Johnny goofing around in his domestic dungeon with his equally bizarre pet dog. Released on Warp Films, the electronic label's burgeoning movie and DVD imprint, the disc is packaged with a 42-page book of Cunningham's grotesquely prurient drawings and photography. An Italian firm due to print the book refused, claiming the images of impossible anatomical configurations were too offensive.

While his groundbreaking human animation in *Rubber*

Johnny is technically dazzling, impatient fans of the 34-year-old director will rightly wonder what he's been doing for the last five years, particularly when he returns with this relatively low-key work. "*Rubber Johnny* might look like a six-minute sketch but it's technically more advanced than anything I've done before," insists Cunningham, resplendent as ever in tatty jeans and a once-white cardigan, in a noisy bar in London's Soho. "It's sketchy in that it's not on the same scale as other videos I've done but on a technical level it's light years past them. When you watch it you'll see that just about every aspect of my craft has improved."

Like the star of his new short, Cunningham has spent the best part of this century locked away, developing his craft in his north London apartment (bought with the proceeds from directing Madonna's "Frozen" promo in 1998). With no desire to direct more pop videos, despite regular offers, he embarked on a series of treatments for scripts based on William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, cult Italian graphic novel *RanXerox*, and a Philip K. Dick tale, none of which worked out. "I think that directors in the feature film business spend a lot of time on projects that don't happen," he sighs.

This time indoors wasn't an entire waste, however.

One of Chris Cunningham's controversial drawings that accompany the *Rubber Johnny* DVD release.



Scenes from Cunningham's *Rubber Johnny*

"If you want to play around with the rules then first you have to know the rules inside out."

"I've been doing nothing but crafting for five years," he admits. Surprisingly old-fashioned in his approach to art, Cunningham—an exquisite draughtsman who didn't attend art school—firmly believes that artists should do their utmost to master their chosen craft. "I think if you want to play around with the rules then first you have to know the rules inside out," he says. "Let's say you're making music videos but you hate big-budget MTV videos, that doesn't mean you should make cheap and nasty videos. You should try to make videos which are as technically accomplished as the cheesy clichéd ones."

When he started working in the film industry as a teenage assistant to Stanley Kubrick, Cunningham wasn't just attracted to being a sculptor or an engineer or a make-up artist—he wanted to excel at every discipline, like a latter-day Renaissance man. "My plan is to be really multimedia," he says. "I don't want to be a jack of all trades and master of none, but be a master of all of them. I'm not saying I've mastered any yet but that's the aim."

With this in mind, and given his obvious love of music, Cunningham attends all manner of gigs and raves in London and can occasionally be heard DJing a fine blend of synth pop, soundtracks, and *musique concrète*—it's not shocking to learn that he's written stacks of his own tracks. "I love learning stuff and setting myself challenges," he says. "Making those videos I became more interested in music to the point where I realized I spent all my time studying and writing music. What usually happens is a video director goes off and

makes a feature film. I'm in a weird position where I'm more interested in music than I am in film."

It's a tantalizing prospect, certainly. As to the precise nature of his compositions, Cunningham isn't giving much away. But you don't need to be Fox Mulder to figure out what his music *might* sound like. "The bottom line for me has always been songs," he says. "If something crosses over it's to do with the songs, the craft of the songwriting. The trouble with most electronic music is it's just one long verse. That's why I love Kraftwerk—*Computer World* is innovative sonically but it still has incredible songs. And that was my rule: I'm not doing anything unless I've got a really good song first and then I go off and start."

Cunningham says he's always sketched out songs on his guitar and keyboard. For him, refreshingly, melody is king. For this reason he adores Aphex's celestial harmonies and French techno whizz Vitalic's stirring anthems. "My favourite kind of pop music is melancholy pop music: Giorgio Moroder, Abba, you know, Tears For Fears' first album. All the best songs are sad songs about missed opportunities and longing."

Whether his music will be released remains to be seen. But there's no doubt he's keen to master this latest craft. "To people I know, it looks like I haven't been doing anything," he adds. "But in a year's time it's going to be obvious what I've been doing because I'll have a load of stuff out. And everyone will be like, how the fuck did you find time to do all that stuff?"

And with that he shuffles out of the bar and into Soho. He slips his headphones over his long hair. What's he listening to? Phil Collins. You have been warned.

Rubber Johnny is out now on Warp Films. www.warprecords.com



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Shock Value

Laptop provocateur Jason Forrest talks noise with Public Enemy producer Hank Shocklee.
WORDS: VERONICA FOX PHOTOS: RAYON RICHARDS (SHOCKLEE) AND DANIEL FLASCHAR (FORREST)

Jason Forrest's music (formerly released under the Donna Summer alias) is a crazy pastiche of recognizable pop themes and postmodern noise, from glitch to cock rock. But before 34-year-old Forrest was performing demented laptop surgery, he was a kid from the deep South finding solace in punk rock; and somewhere—in between playing dubbed cassettes of Bad Brains and Minor Threat down to the nubs—a friend turned him onto Public Enemy. PE remains a major inspiration to Forrest's work, particularly

their production techniques and philosophies, which were steered by the Bomb Squad's Hank Shocklee (who is behind the amazing production of 1987's *Yo! Bum Rush The Show* and 1988's *It Takes a Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back*). With Shocklee working on his multi-armed music company Shocklee Entertainment and Forrest about to release a new album on Sonig, we used the magic of transatlantic phone lines to connect the two for a discussion of the whys and hows of bringing the noise.





“We took anything and made it feel like a rock guitar.”

— Hank Shocklee

Jason Forrest: Obviously the Bomb Squad did something no one else really had done at the time when you first began producing. Why were you so interested in all this noise?

Hank Shocklee: We wanted to do something that we knew was going to wake up people. We wanted to alert them to a message that was frustrating us. We were calling it noise because nobody wanted to hear it—they didn’t want to hear our ideas, they didn’t want to hear our ideologies about music. So we bottled it as noise and threw it at them.

I always like how Chuck’s MCing, this idea of a hard pill to swallow, matched up with this literal idea of noise—of a Prince guitar solo being fed back and looped so that it made this big slab of sound. How did you decide to choose this aesthetic?

Rhythm was a very big key with PE. I’m into harmonics from a dissonant point of view. I like the way harmonies work together, and I can also appreciate harmonies that don’t work together but they gel. PE was basically an experiment with sound. I wanted to make sure that the sound that we were doing matched the mood of what we were about. We were very angry about everything at the time—noise was something that was coined out of the aggressiveness that we were creating. If you go back through musical history, anything that was done that pushed the envelope was perceived as noise. Rock ‘n’ roll was noise. Classical music was noise. We came across with a new form of music—basically taking music that was already pre-recorded and pulling out the frequencies and sustaining them and stretching them and bending them and controlling them in a fashion that felt to us like rock ‘n’ roll. We took anything and made it feel like a rock guitar, whether it be a horn blast or a violin string pad.

There’s so many small elements of other people’s music that do pop out and are recognizable in your music. I’ve mentioned Prince, the intro for “Fame” from David Bowie, Beatles bits. Why did you allow things to be recognizable? Because that was the fun in it. It was the musical hook, if you would. If everything is unknown then it gets washed out. Some things have to have some context to it. So you could go, ‘Oh! I know where that part came from!’ but

you’re not going to know where all the other things came from.

Every record we made was a one-off. There is so much done in those records that *we* don’t even know where these things come from. If we put a kick drum onto a track it would be layered with two other kick drums so that it would create one sound. If we wanted to do a deep bass sound we might use the 808. Or we would make our own 808 and we would truncate the parts differently. We would take the attack off the 808 off the front and just use the sustain portion. We may take [the sound] off of a record and scratch it and then take the warping sound of it and trigger that inside. There was no one technique that we used on anything. You can never just sit there and go ‘Okay, I’m going to go pull up an SP1200 and pull up a stock sound of a kickdrum and a snare and I’ll get your sound.’ That’s not going to happen.

Another thing I was always so bewildered by initially and have come to cherish are the little cut-up parts between tracks.

To make these records work was very detailed, it took a lot of time. We would do a lot of preliminary work before we would go into a studio. We’ve always wanted to make the sound as visual as possible. We were doing foley that cats would do in movies on albums. Say, for example, we wanted a speech that said things in a certain way but the speech only said half the phrase. We may go back in and recreate the way the speech was recorded using all the studio effects we have, then insert them in as samples so that those things became seamless. We would add in the hiss, we would add in the crackle—all of the things that made it appear like it was a sample.

Now those are presets, but we created those things before all these companies even knew what the hell was going on. When you look at filtering, for example, that was a thing that we were doing because we stumbled across it. It was actually a defect in the original SB12 design. When you plugged in the plug into the mix out of a SB12, and the cord doesn’t go in all the way, it still makes a connection but it shaves off the high end; what was left was the bass portions of the sound. When we realized that we said ‘Oh wow, that’s a cool effect.’

What did each member of the Bomb Squad do to make up the sound? That part to me seems really mysterious.

We all did everything. Besides me, Keith, Eric, and Chuck, there was Flavor Flav and Terminator X. Everything was divvied up to whoever was feeling what at that particular moment. If Eric felt like ‘I can add a little sequence part here’—it may just be a tambourine loop—then he would add that. If Flav feels like ‘I wanna add the timing to this little drum sample,’ he’s going to add that. Everything went through my control because I’m the one that’s overseeing the entire process. Nobody had a station, but what we *did* do is get down as a band. Eric might be on the drum pads, Keith might be on another set of drum pads, Chuck might be on a turntable, Flavor might grab a bass, Terminator was on a turntable, I might be on a keyboard sampler. And we’re all just jamming—just making a fucking mess—but we’re running tape. Every now and then you’ll get a moment that will be the most incredible five seconds and that little piece might end up being a part of a record.

We did not sequence things. We wanted everything to have our feel. If you really listen closely, a lot of the timing on things is not correct and it’s not supposed to be correct. You can easily take a high hat, put it into a machine, quantize it at 16s, and let it run from beginning to end. That sounds very mechanical. You’re not going to get the loose feel of it. When we play it by hand, the high hats are at different lengths and different timing. When you start stacking those things, you’re getting a groove that’s being created from all the things that are a little bit off. The reason why most records made today are boring is because they’re linear. They begin and end doing the same patterns, the same spacing, the same timing. Records are supposed to be a living, breathing thing. Visit Hank Shocklee online at www.shockleeentertainment.com. Jason Forrest’s *Shamelessly Exciting* is out October 4 on Sonig. www.sonig.de, www.cockrockdisco.com





Swift & Deadly

Jiggling asses and starting fights with the queen of Baltimore club music, K-Swift.
WORDS: VIVIAN HOST PHOTOS: SHAWN BRACKBILL

This is music as martial law. Tons of stuttering trombones bleat out a shuffling time like “Taps” on cocaine. Snares back up against each other and pop-pop like automatic gun fire. Demanding bass reinforces the boom-clack-bounce-shuffle of the breaks and the militancy of the samples—repetitive staccato orders like “Watch out for the big girls!” and “Open it up! Give ‘em some room!”

In the middle of this mayhem, behind a p-popping honey with inch-long green and white acrylics and a wifebeater-sporting man so buff he looks like an action figure, stands all 5’ 4” of Baltimore’s Club Queen K-Swift. Despite her size and her baby face, 26-year-old Khia Edgerton cuts an authoritative presence behind the turntables. Surrounded by scattered CDs and vinyl, she’s full of studied, pouty-lipped cool, even as the sound system repeatedly gives out. The second it comes back on, she’s back on the mic again, entertaining the crowd with such salvos as “Everybody who wants to get laid tonight scream!” and “Everyone who has \$20 in your pocket throw your hands up!”

That last command is clearly delivered tongue-in-cheek, as Edgerton is playing to a warehouse full of Baltimore indie rock kids, most of whom probably don’t have more than \$5 to their name.

On a normal Friday night, Edgerton would most likely be controlling the decks at urban nightspot Club Choices. Choices—with its roster of guests like Rod Lee, Redz, and DJ Technics—is *the* place to hear what’s known as “Baltimore club” (or, if you live in Maryland, simply “club music”). Though it’s been around since the early ‘90s, Bmore club is slowly becoming the next form of regional bass music—like Chicago’s ghetto house, Detroit’s ghetto tech, Washington D.C.’s go-go, and Houston’s



K-SWIFT'S TOP 5 BMORE CLUB TRACKS

1. Blaq Star "Get Your Hands Up"
2. Blaq Star "Hey Mothafuckers"
3. Blaq Star "Get My Gun"
4. Debonaire Samir "Samir Theme"
5. DJ Class "Back That Ass on Me"

screw music—to leak outside its small urban confines and out to other audiences around the country. Formerly only accessible through underground mixtapes and Baltimore radio stations like 92Q, club records are starting to be carried at NY record store Turntable Lab and played by electronic DJs like Diplo. All of which leads us to how, on this hot Friday night, K-Swift ended up rocking a room full of kids in Weezer glasses and thrift store tees soaked with sweat.

"The most shocking thing about that party was that there was a whole other crowd that was into the music that I didn't even know about," says Edgerton, who's speaking to me on the phone while waiting to board a roller coaster at Six Flags. "It floored me and to this day I can't believe it."

Edgerton may be surprised that art school kids like her music as well as urban crowds, but she's never had any doubt about her talents. In between shouting at her friends and passing off the phone, she explains how she got into DJing at the age of 11. "I've always loved music," she says, her Maryland accent drawing out the "u" in music until it sounds like "mewwwwsic," rounded and syrupy. "My father was a DJ for years. He played oldies but goodies—what I call 25-and-older music like Earth Wind and Fire, The O'Jays, disco music like Masterdon Committee's 'Funkbox Party' and Strafe's 'Set It Off' As soon as he would leave for

work I used to be like, *whoosh...* in the basement and messing with his stuff. Eventually something did accidentally get broken and that's how I got caught. I had a long conversation with him and told him that's what I really wanted to do. [My parents] got me my own stuff so I could tear it up."

Starting off with records like Kid 'N' Play's *2Hype* and Run D.M.C.'s "Peter Piper"—and with female DJs like Cocoa Chanel and Salt 'N' Pepa's Spinderella as idols—Edgerton learned how to scratch. She eventually moved on to beat matching in 11th grade, when she started playing high school dances and fashion shows. Around the same time Baltimore club was starting to jump off and Edgerton got an influential internship at WERQ FM (92Q), Baltimore's biggest urban station. Her outgoing personality—and her unusual status as a young female in a male-dominated scene—meant it was only a short ride until she got the station's best slot: weeknights from 6-10 p.m. with co-host Squirrel Wyde.

"I've always been outgoing and I never had low self-esteem or none of that," she explains. "But the worst thing I've had to go through [DJing] is being a female and having the guys hate on [me] so bad. Guys don't really want to see a female grow and expand. There would be a lot of [guys saying] 'She's a girl. She's wack. She can't do it,' without even hearing me. But you just got to keep to your own because everybody hates on everybody. You always just got to stay focused and don't worry about what anybody else thinks about you."

Since being crowned Club Queen—a title she says she was basically given by the people of the city of Baltimore—Edgerton hasn't really had to deal with the haters. She's got a radio show, a management company, and is a record pool director at Unruly, a club music distributor. Her last mixtape, *Vol. 6: The Return*, just sold 4,000 copies in Baltimore alone, and she feels more comfortable than ever, whether on air or behind the mic at gigs. ("It took a lot of courage to do it at first but now I can't do a party without saying something to the crowd," she explains. "I feel as though you need to let people know that you're there. Ain't nobody going to promote you like you're going to promote yourself.")

More than that, she gets to have fun everyday, playing jams from the dirty (Doc Slice's "Asses Wigglen") to the melancholy—like the a capella of John Legend's R&B tear-jerker "Ordinary People" set over the Lyn Collins "Think" break or Rod Lee's uplifting-yet-depressing ghetto anthem "Dance My Pain Away" ("Bill collectors on me/Have to file bankruptcy/Need some help from somebody"). More than anything, K-Swift likes the harder stuff, like Blaq Star's "Get My Gun," whose refrain threatens "You keep on fuckin' around, I'm gonna go get my gun." "I've seen a lot of crazy fights," she laughs. "Especially when you play 'Get My Gun' or [the Bmore club remix of] Lil' Jon's 'Throw It Up.' That's when everything goes *craaaazy*."

For more on K-Swift, check www.clubqueenswift.com. For more on Baltimore club, check www.unrulyrecords.com, www.baltimoreclubtracks.com, or governmentnames.blogspot.com.

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ILLUSTRATIONS (IN ORDER): TROPHY, ANNETTE MONNIER, BURLESQUE DESIGN

OPPOSITE: Top Row: Lichen Kemp for Outskirts; Delta Inc; Tiffany Malakooti for 2K. Middle Row: Staple; Huskmitz for UARM. Bottom Row: Liness; Silquiss; Delphi Collective. HERE: Top: Schwippe. Bottom Row: Genreview. Gauckler for 2K; Ubiquity; Ghostly.



Top: Josh Podoll. Middle Row: Imaginary Foundation; Jeremyville. On Snake: Dylan Martorell for Oniskirts. Bottom Row: Tiffany Malakotti; Seven-Nine.

Top Row: Silas; Dora for Upper Playground; The Quiet Life. On horse: UARM Black Label. Bottom Row: Breakbeat Science; Exact Science; Dave Dennis for 2K.

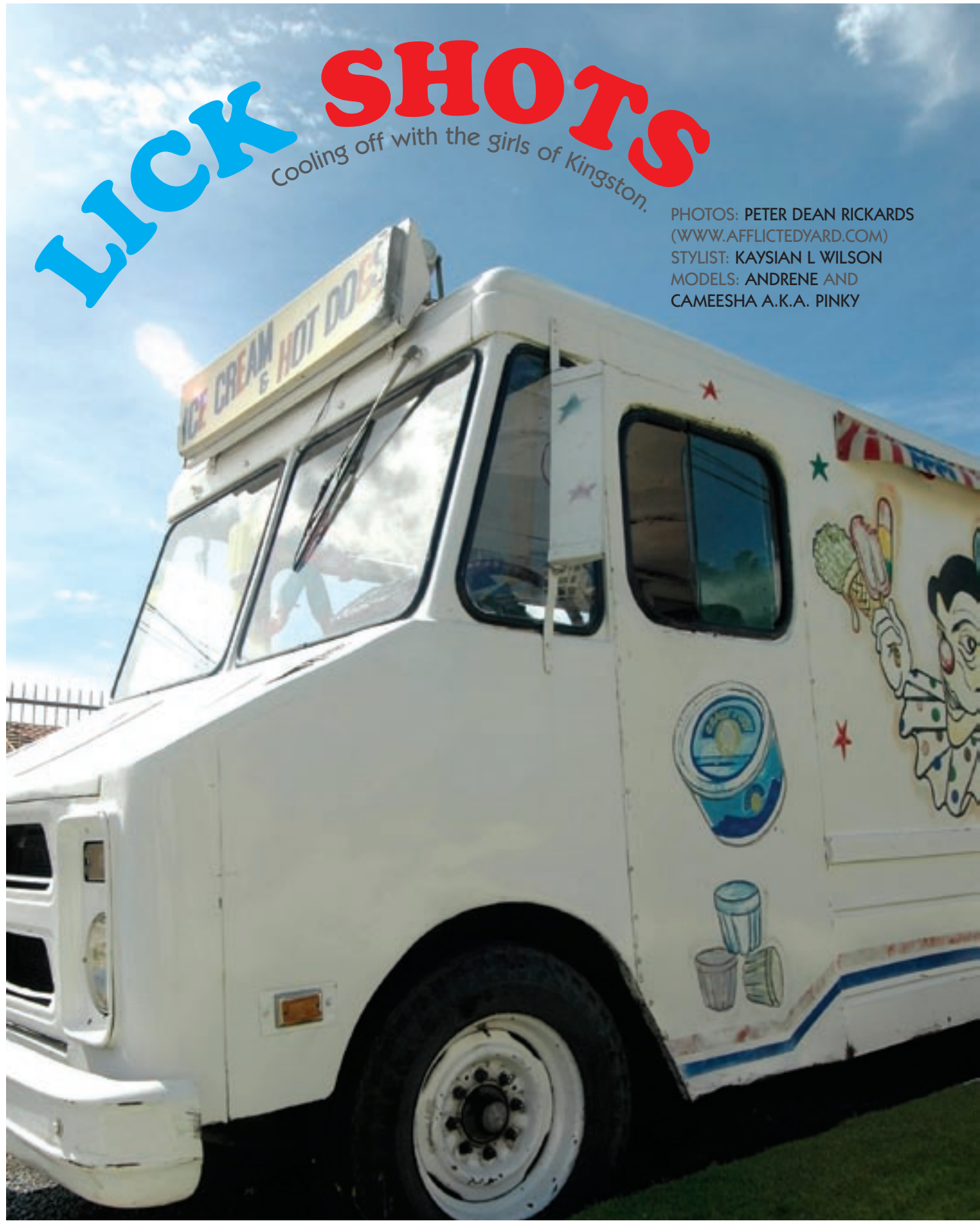


Top Row: Fucking Awesome;
Timothy Carrett for DreamState;
Neck Face for UARM. Bottom Row:
French for 2K; House Industries;
Crown Farmer.

Top Row: Dylan Martorell for
Outskirts; Commonwealth
Stacks; Sikkuss. Bottom Row:
Fresco; The Quiet Life.

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Pinky wears **top** by Free People, **belt** by Leather Rock, and **earrings** and **ring** by Candy Apple.



Pinky wears **top** by 3D by Dexter Pottinger and **bracelets** by Kerry.



Andrene wears **hoody** and **bracelets** by 3D by Dexter Pottinger, **shorts** by GMI, and **shoes** by Chinese Laundry.

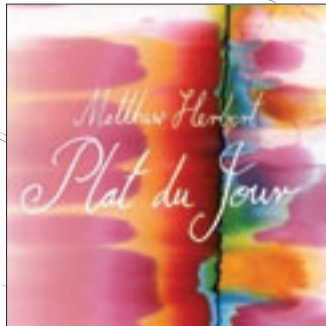
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albums available 8/23



Matthew Herbert
Plat du Jour {Accidental}

"With Plat Du Jour Matthew Herbert has managed to explode the dry conservatism of the avant garde by, radically, having fun" — The Guardian. Featuring contributions from Dani Siciliano, master chef Heston Blumenthal (recreating Stacey Lawton's final meal on Death Row) world coffee authority Antony Wild and long time Radiohead collaborator Stanley Donwood, 30,000 broiler chickens, 3255 people eating apples and a recreation of the lunch shared by Tony Blair and George Bush run over by a ChiefTrain tank.



The Kings of House
Kings of House {Rapster/BBE}

Please welcome the ubiquitous duo, Masters at Work to BBE Records "Kings of" series. Kings of House by Kenny Dope Gonzalez & Louie Vega (aka Masters at Work) is a remarkable mix from today's Kings of the genre, bowing reverentially at the virtuoso performances from the inventors of the movement.



Boozoo Bajou
Dust My Broom {IK7}

Dust My Broom, Boozoo Bajou's follow up to their debut release Satta, further expands the Boozoo sound into a territory that unifies Punk, reggae, downtempo, & dub. The album features Willie Hutch, Tony Joe White, Top Cat, U-Brown Joe Dokie and more.



Aphrodite
Overdrive {Feed Records}

World-renowned drum 'n' bass master Aphrodite unleashes his latest aural weapon Overdrive on Feed Records featuring several Aphrodite tracks including his collaborations with Beverley Knight and Mickey Finn and killer anthems & remixes of Afrika Bambaataa, Distorted Minds, Stevie Hyper and Dope Ammo of Drunken Masters.

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VA - Strange Funky Games & Things {BBE}

Strange Funky Games & Things is a musical biography of the evolution of R&B and Pop. This continuing series delves into the back catalogue of Rare Groove, Soul, Funk and Disco to find the tunes that have constructed the perfect silhouette of today's R&B and Hip Hop. Album features rare tracks from James Brown, The Supremes, Donald Byrd and many others!



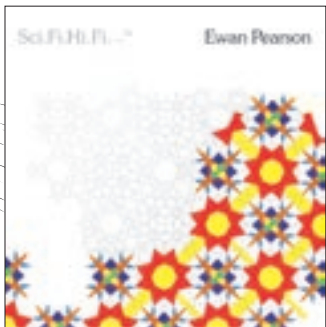
Nickodemus
Endangered Species {Wonderwheel}

Known for his Turntables on the Hudson parties, Nickodemus captures some of the best artists and sounds New York City has to offer on his solo debut album. Artists include members of the Groove Collective, Carol C of Si Se, Victor Axelrod of Antibalas, Jean Shepherd of Radio Mundial, Echan White of Tortured Soul, Will Holland (aka Quantic), Polo of La Familia, The Real Live Show, Nappy G, Apani B & Andrea Montiero. Don't miss Nickodemus on his September national tour!



Adam Freeland
Back to Mine {DMC UK}

The latest installment in the Back to Mine series comes from the successful DJ, remixer, club promoter and record label boss, Adam Freeland. His remixing credits include The Orb, Headliza, Orbital, Deejay Punk Roc, and Dylan Rhymes. Adam starts his Back to Mine mix off like no other before with some super charged rock from the likes of Trail of the Dead, then he drops such dope felled acoustic delights as Elliot Smith, The Beta Band and PJ Harvey.



Ewan Pearson
Sci-Fi Hi-Fi {Soma}

This is the first ever mix CD released on the esteemed Soma Recordings label, mixed by in demand remixer Ewan Pearson (Moby, Depeche Mode, Alter Ego) using Ableton Live software to key match and re-edit tracks. Features cutting edge tracks from Ricardo Villalobos, Brazilian Girls, Spirit Catcher, Different Gear and Dirt Crew. Ewan Pearson has outdone himself with this immaculate collection.



ALBUM REVIEWS 09.05

GURU
VERSION 7.0: THE STREET
SCRIPTURES
7 Grand/US/CD

O.C.
STARCHILD
Grit/US/CD



**TWO PILLARS OF '90S
HIP-HOP RESURFACE
WITH MIXED RESULTS.**

True school-minded MCs looking to replicate and evoke the essence of the classics have found a simple solution: do as was done back in those days and record uniform-sounding albums with a single, focused producer. North Carolina beatmaker 9th Wonder has become a go-to guy for these sort of releases, hooking up beats for entire albums by Murs of the Living Legends, Jean Grae, and Buckshot. Similarly, EDO.G and Pete Rock collaborated thoroughly for 2004 *My Own Worst Enemy*, while Common and Kanye West conceived Common's *Be* together.

One person who has always known the value of steady vibing with your beatmaker in the studio is the emcee Mr. Keith Elam, known to fans as Gifted Unlimited Rhymes Universal-Guru. With DJ Premier in his corner, Guru's been one-half of Gang Starr, arguably hip-hop's most consistent album-making legacy. Without Premier's cutting analog beats or the warm organic instrumentation of his Jazzmatazz records, Guru's monotone delivery tends to suffer, as evidenced on 2001's *Baldhead Slick & Da Click* LP.

For his first proper solo album under the name Guru, he's enlisted the hand of Solar, a Brooklyn-bred producer who also happens to be his partner in the pair's new 7 Grand label. *Version 7.0* is a rocky start to the relationship though, as Solar's beats sound hollow and somewhat careless, lacking any semblance of the bite and bounce we're used to hearing Guru over. While the usual tales of hard knocks ("Surviving The Game," "Feed the Hungry") and self-promotional tomes

("Don Status," "Hall of Fame") might be good enough over classic Premo beats, they don't cut the mustard here.

O.C.'s *Starchild*, on the other hand, is a return-to-form for the veteran Brooklyn-Queens MC, who followed his classic mid-'90s LPs *Word...Life* and *Jewelz* with 2001's forgettable *Bon Appetit*, then fell off the map for four years. With beats from largely unknown producers the Locsmif, Vanguard, and Soul Supreme laying the foundation for a 13-song wall of focused rhymes, *Starchild* has all the makings of a sleeper classic.

The only thing is, it will never see a U.S. release in its original form. After launching the album in Europe and Japan, Boston-based Grit Records has scrapped this version of the album due to sample clearance issues and the impending release of another O.C. LP on Hiero Imperium. Word has it that when *Starchild* eventually does hit US streets it will be produced entirely by Pete Rock; while that collaboration will no doubt have beat-minded heads salivating at the mouth, it's an album that, as it stands, doesn't need improving.

Songs like "Everidae" and "Who Run It?" seamlessly flow into one another like one continuous thought. With the only guest appearance coming in the form of a sung hook from O.C.'s boyhood neighbor, Pharoahe Monch, the conversations are instead between O.C. and the music. The result is uncalculated, familiar yet original, and one of the better straight-up rap albums of 2005. *Jesse Serwer*

StudioDistribution.com





ISOLÉE
WE ARE MONSTER

Playhouse/GER/CD
From the menacing, minor-key mutations of the first track, "Pictureloved," to the sprawling, sexy 10-minute chug of "Pillowtalk," the second artist album from Isolée (a.k.a. Rajko Müller) is a masterpiece. While "Pillowtalk"—with its swelling and shifting plucked melodies—probably comes closest to evoking the sublime tech house groove of Isolée's reputation-making single, "Beau Mot Plage," *We Are Monster* further explores Müller's affection for rock, with "Schrapnell" driven by an echoing lick and a salty pair of slide guitars and strings and more fretwork pushing the grind of "Today." The album is not *entirely* flawless—the plodding lurch of "Jelly Baby/Fish" grows a tad annoying with repeated listens—but with the slurping electro and absolutely massive breakdown of "My Hi-Matic" and the way songs like "Face B" evolve with a complexity matched by their delicious visceral details, Isolée has made a wondrous beast with a life all its own. *Peter Nicholson*



ALARM WILL SOUND
ACOUSTICA

Cantaloupe/US/CD
When I imagine Richard D. James—a.k.a. Aphex Twin, Polygon Window, et. al.—it is always as a leering puppet master tethered to electro-acoustically scrambled computer monitors and pianos strangled as if by garrote. So for Alarm Will Sound—a New York-based 22-piece orchestra—to record all acoustic arrangements of James' works (primarily off 2001's *Drukqs* and 1996's *Richard D. James Album*) only seems fitting. I can equally imagine the Alarm ensemble pivoting frenetically and with finesse, fingers to their own steely filaments as they find compelling counterpoints in CPU-chipped chaos and detune through a home improvement store's worth of tonal transmutation. *Tony Ware*

ALEXANDER'S DARK BAND
DOBUTSU BANCHO

DC/UK/CD
Note to all you aspiring turntablist champs—J. Saul Kane is sick to death of hearing you scratch the word *frfresh!* while doing that Run D.M.C. routine of yours with double copies of "Peter Piper." It's tired, it's wack, and if you truly want to lay waste

to the competition you'll pick up this, his third DJ tool under the Alexander's Dark Band tag. A Kane production is always a bit twisted—witness the slab-like drum breaks and the buzzing analog synths in the background. *Dobutsu Bancho* is no different, with bizarre animal noises and snippets of soundtracks peppered throughout. Who needs "*frfresh!*" when you've got the bark of a sea lion at your fingertips? *Brock Phillips*

ALIAS & EHREN
LILLIAN

Anticon/US/CD
On 2003's *Muted*, Alias (nee Brendon Whitney) brought some of the thickest and certainly most blissed-out beats to Anticon's roster of "lap-hop" experimentalists. Brother Ehren was impressed, and offered to contribute his skills with the flute, saxophone, and clarinet to sessions for the instrumental *Lillian* (named after their grandmother). An extension of *Muted*'s shoegaze aesthetic, the album's textures are warmed by Ehren's jazzy improvisations on tracks like "Back And Forth," where clickety-clacks and fuzzy guitars escalate to a gorgeously spazzed-out climax. "52nd & West" is likewise made light and giddy by reed instruments. *Rachel Shimp*

ANTHONY B
BLACK STAR

Greensleeves/UK/CD
Rasta firebrand Anthony B made his name at Star Trail, the pioneering dancehall label run by his former manager, Richard Bell, but much subsequent material has been patchy. Now Mr. B is back on track with a cracking new album, tastefully produced by Frenchie of Maximum Sound. There's a strong new take on Ini Kamoze's "World A Music" (made famous by Damien "Jr. Gong" Marley's '05 global smash "Welcome To Jamrock") and good guest spots from Ras Shiloh and the ubiquitous Jah Cure, but what really makes this album work so well is that B's topical lyrics are ably matched by Frenchie's rough rhythms, cut at various JA and UK studios. *David Katz*

APSCI
THANKS FOR ASKING

Quannum/US/CD
While not nearly as revolutionary as you think they think they are (no more cookie-puss harmonizer, please), one has to admit APSCI has applied some science to their mix of electronic noise, hip-hop, and pop—and some of this is pretty experimental science at that. The duo indulges their sci-fi leanings by using *Godzilla* samples and other laboratory studio chemistry. And while radioactive amalgamations like this often end up as tragic novelties, there's something about this couple/band—Boogie Down Bronxian Rafael LaMotta and Down Under's Dana Diaz—that suggests they're the real deal. *Daniel Siwek*

BEATFANATIC
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO BEATFANATIC

Soundscape/UK/CD
Championed by Soundscape Records this time, Beatfanatic again flexes his fusion of breaks, disco, and Afro-Cuban rhythms. Yet unlike his work on the Raw Fusion label, this project seems uninspired and gets real old, real fast. Tracks like "Boom Bangin'," "Let Us Pray," and "Holdin' Out" begin with bland drums—monotonous 10 seconds in, and dreadful by the two-minute mark. Some songs—like "African Love" and "Pete's Funk"—are indeed colorful, but don't make *The Gospel* worthwhile. Though this project is being touted as a summer party album, you're better off saving your money for the refreshments. *David Ma*

KEVIN BLECHDOM
EAT MY HEART OUT

Sub Up—Chicks on Speed/GER/CD
No, you did not see the psychosexual album cover; move on. Blechdom needs to move on likewise from her Fisher Price-made synth presets and ditties that were once amusing five years ago. *Eat My Heart Out* is basically a set of ballads from a lovesick and fetal-positioned soul. As irony barely excuses bad art these days, the Hallmark-quality poetry and tacky Nickelodeon pop do not muster—although the Mr. Rogers chimes that begin "Torture Chamber" are amusing. "It's funny, being yourself is making a joke itself," Kevin utters to herself at one point. Indeed. *Cameron Macdonald*

BOOZOO BAJOU
DUST MY BROOM

!K7/US/CD
Many producers have attempted to mesh Delta blues with dub beats, usually with little success. Too often, the results rely on a drab timidity from one side or the other—no grit in their blues or ghost in their dub. On *Dust My Broom*, German electronic spliff rollers Boozoo Bajou create a rare balance: they find the dub in Sonny Boy Williamson and create post-modern classics with help from toaster U-Brown and soul legend Willie Hutch. As an experiment, *Dust My Broom* is an unmitigated success; as an album, it's a late-night classic. *Justin Hopper*

BUS FEATURING MC SOOM-T
FEELIN' DANK

~scape/GER/CD
Glasgow's MC Soom-T waxes existential dread here, but the music grows a rose garden. "*The right answer is always wrong/I learned this from the day I was born,*" she mopes. Berlin's Bus (Tom Thiel and Daniel Meeo) delivers digital dub that seems snapped together like Erector pieces—every tightly wound thud, neon-lit organ blurt, and guitar riff clunks into place as the single, "Diamond in the Rough," attests. The only catch is that the MC's chirp grows monotonous over time and offsets the Bus' angst with camp. Still, this record marks a step forward in bridging d-dub with hip-hop. *Cameron Macdonald*

BUCKSHOT & 9TH WONDER
CHEMISTRY

Duck Down/US/CD
KAZÉ & 9TH WONDER
SPIRIT OF '94: VERSION 9.0
Brick/US/CD
Note to all emcees: it's about the beats. Buckshot (of Black Moon and Boot Camp Click infamy) never truly reaped the benefits of his talents but 9th Wonder's new jack instrumentals, heavy on buttery soul vocal swipes ("No Comparison") and snap, crackle, popping snares ("Food for Thought") make this scorned rapper's rants plausibly entertaining. Much like Buck and his BK cohorts in '94, North Carolina rapper Kazé is just starting to find his voice on the mic—9th's tasty production keeps the neophyte focused while he channels a halcyon hip-hop aesthetic. No matter the time or the place, it's the grooves that keep both emcees on point. *Aqua Boogie*

CAGE
HELL'S WINTER

Def Jux/US/CD
Cage has been releasing music for over a decade—long enough to gain him a cult-like following of fans and a sizeable gaggle of haters. But *Hell's Winter*, his debut on the Def Jux label, is indisputably well produced, no matter how much folks may want to dislike it. With beats by some of the best in this new wave of hip-hop production (DJ Shadow, El-P, RJD2, Camu Tao), Cage would be hard pressed to mess this album up. His lyrics may forever be teenage angst-y, depressive and angry, but this album is far from amateurish. *Stacey Dugan*

THE CHAPTER
US VS. THEM

Awthentix/US/CD
The Chapter—rapper Verbal E. and producer 3Sixty—makes a Windy City to Sin City connection that results in unpretentious hip-hop. Silky vibes and spry percussion pepper "...I Do Despise," a treatise on intricacies of the N word, and somber chords propel "Akhill Hill," a scorned lover diatribe. No groundbreaking topics are tackled, but thought provoking joints, able lyricism, and minimal soap box posturing make The Chapter's live band rap accessible to everyone. *Aqua Boogie*

COLETTE
HYPNOTIZED

Om/US/CD
Previously showcasing her pipes on albums *Our Day* and *In the Sun*, classically-trained Colette gives her vocals center stage on her artist debut, *Hypnotized*. Doused at times in classic, funky house and electro rhythms, her lovely soprano unfortunately can't elevate the album above pop lite. From the rainy-day groove of "A Little More," where she sings "*You think it's easy/To sit and wait for you/You think I deserve/All the things you do,*" to the ballad-ish "The One," where she pines for love, Colette's lyrical and musical combinations are a bit too diary-literal. Ultimately, *Hypnotized* is the auditory equivalent of reading chick lit. *Rachel Shimp*

COOL CALM PETE
LOST

Embedded/US/CD
Laid back with his mind on his anaesthetized culture and his anaesthetized culture on his mind, Cool Calm Pete's intelligent drawl rolls forth like a string of variables looking to be concretized. But staying calm can sometimes be confused with staying quiet, and if you're not stoned or taking notes Pete's delivery can sometimes veer towards the dispassionate. But the vibe is always hopping, thanks to stellar production by Doc Strange (especially on "F@#\$%&!*"k Yooouu"), DJ Pre and Cool Calm himself. All of which makes this a capable debut from an emerging talent still breaking out of his Quasimoto-decorated cocoon. *Scott Thill*

CROSSOVER
CRYPTIC AND DIRE SALLOW FACED HOODS BLAST OFF INTO OBLIVION

Gigolo/GER/CD
The second Crossover LP benefits from a broader, richer production palette thanks to the addition of fellow Gigolo artist Matt "Mount" Sims behind the scenes—the cheap-sounding synths that blighted their debut are nowhere to be heard this time out. The duo's range of influences also appears to have been extended in the interim between albums—Italo horror soundtracks have clearly shaped a number of the tracks. As with many of their Gigolo contemporaries, the lyrics still occasionally grate, but perseverance proves rewarding. *Dave Stenton*

JUNIOR DELGADO
INVISIBLE MUSIC

Incredible/UK/CD
A quintessential roots reggae vocalist, Delgado's anguished growl was a cry from the wilderness, generally drawing attention to injustice, uplifting the poor, and praising the delights of love. His untimely death in April means this album is unfortunately his last, but the swansong is a real treat, sensitively co-produced by Adrian Sherwood. Delgado is in fine form throughout, pointing a finger of condemnation at western leaders on the excellent "Thief of Bagdad" and warning of an impending World War III on "Armageddon," but also noting the positive in life on "Help is on the Way" and the title track. Highly recommended *David Katz*

THE DINING ROOMS
EXPERIMENTS IN AMBIENT SOUL

Schema/ITA/CD
Downtempo albums often get compared to movie soundtracks—both types of music, unless they're done incredibly well, come across as innocuous and forgetful, sinking into the background like a wilting wallflower. Perhaps in an attempt to escape this particular dilemma, Italian duo The Dining Rooms recorded their latest album, *Experiments in Ambient Soul*, with live instruments. While it gives this genre-hopper album a little more presence, overall the album is about as edgy as a Nerf sword. The Dining Rooms aim for grandeur, but their tight arrangements sound like something that's been heard many times before. *Patrick Sisson*



T.O.K.
UNKNOWN LANGUAGE

VP/US/CD
A guilty pleasure that fits the summer of 2005 like a glove, T.O.K.'s second album, *Unknown Language*, offers a slice of Jamaican dancehall in its most unabashedly American-influenced form. A power pop record in patois, *Unknown* collects all of the suave foursome's singles ("Gal You Ah Lead," "Galang Gal") from the past three years along with a smattering of new songs like the semi-conscious "Wah Gwaan" and the pulsing "Neck Breakers." While a remix of the reggaeton-flavored "She's Hotter" featuring Miami thug Pitbull may be the foursome's most fire single to date, the highlight may be "Tell Me If You Still Care," a sentimental ballad over Arif Cooper's Celebration riddim that evokes the group's roots in late '80s/early '90s American R&B. *Jesse Serwer*



**EIGHT FROZEN MODULES
CRUMBLING AND RESPONDING**
G25 Productions/US/CD
**POLYCUBIST VS. DUBLONER
SELECTA ONE**
Skor/US/CD

Since 1997, the astoundingly versatile Eight Frozen Modules (one of Ken Gibson's many aliases) has made a convincing argument for the health of IDM. *Crumbling And Responding* is 8FM's sixth album of five-dimensional rhythms, psychedelic abstractions, and textural insanity. It's time people start talking about 8FM with the same reverence they do Aphex Twin and Squarepusher. On *Selecta One*, LA studio rats Polycubist (Jason Kennedy) and dubLoner (Gibson again) prove that Caucasians making dub in 2005 isn't absurd. dubLoner edges out Polycubist in this aromatic soundclash, with the former more imaginatively mutating entrenched Tubby/Perry paradigms into fresh configurations. *Dave Segal*



**ELEKTRO4
KEYSTROKE ONE**
Bully/US/CD

ElekTro4 is a smart guy. With his debut, *Keystroke One*, this NYC-based instrumentalist has cleverly divided his album into two sections. Part One: Portrait Of The City is a vibrant, hip-hop-driven response to living in NYC, complete with sampled rhymes and neck-snapping beats. Then there's Part Two: The Suicide Suite, a more downcast grouping of work complete with eerie piano and organ melodies. Almost any hip-hop fan will enjoy Part One, whereas connoisseurs of darker beats (like those of DJ Signify, who provides cuts here) will be drawn to Part Two. Nonetheless, the album is good enough to be enjoyed straight through as well. *Max Herman*



**ELLEN ALLIEN
THRILLS**
BPitch Control/GER/CD

Moodier and darker than 2003's *Berlinette*, *Thrills* maintains Allien's position as a point person for techno's ever-evolving sound. Again she contributes vocals—on "Your Body Is My Body," where a spidery texture and ghostly gurgles travel the empty spaces, and "Down," where an electro break is hijacked by a decidedly feminist chant. Sans beat, dreamy rocker "Naked Rain" could enter the *Pop Ambient* realm, as it-like most of *Thrills*—is propelled by the sentimental melody at its heart. While not all the tracks are as strong, each benefits from Allien's humanistic touch. Recalling Richard Brautigan's 1968 poem, her work seems informed by machines of loving grace. *Rachel Shimp*

**GABIN
MR. FREEDOM**
Astralwerks/US/CD

If you were having cocktails in a smoky Latin jazz club, watching beautiful people dance, Gabin's *Mr. Freedom* would be the soundtrack for the evening. The Italian duo's latest endeavor is an uptempo recording that combines blues and Latin rhythms with a Sergio Mendes-like charm. Songs like "Into My Soul," "Midnight Café," and "It's Gonna Be" are groovy, rhythmic, and surprisingly soulful, making *Mr. Freedom* a refreshing departure from the recent onslaught of mechanical sounding party records. *David Ma*

**GANG GANG DANCE
GOD'S MONEY**
Social Registry/US/CD

If Fat Albert's Junkyard Band were eccentric Brooklyn indies acting on the impulses of an extensive world music collection, they might make a record like *God's Money* in 2005. Recorded at Junkyard Audio Salvage—a self-explanatory playground for analogophiles in Greenpoint—GGD allegedly made use of every noise-making device they could find during the year-long recording of their second LP. The result is a worldly soundclash of the "only in New York" variety; a beautiful/ugly mishmash of tribal drums, Middle Eastern rhythms, Baltic new wave, unconfined psychedelic experimentalism, and vocalist Lizzie Bougatsos' sometimes beautiful, sometimes horrifically off-putting chirps. While it often seems like a magic ride to nowhere, the net result nonetheless feels earth-shatteringly profound. *Jesse Server*

**J-LIVE
THE HEAR AFTER**
Penalty-Rykodisc/US/CD

Although this ex-English teacher and recent Philly transplant may live in a different state, his aesthetics still come from the same New York mind state that produced classic lessons like "Braggin' Writes." Updating old school values for a new school of listeners, the Big Apple native hits heads up on "The Sidewalks" with a clever G-Funk-era synth riff. And anyone who has taught school in the inner city will appreciate "Brooklyn Public Pt 1," when J raps: "One class. 31 students. 32 chairs. 25 desks. I guess they gotta share." A solid effort, J-Live stays atop the indie honor roll. *James Mayo*

**KID606
RESILIENCE**
Tigerbeat6/US/CD

Through his laptop's noise, Miguel Depedro, a.k.a. Kid606, creates as much as he destroys, loves as much as he cuts a conversation and walks away. *Resilience* drops that yin-yang in favor of florid emotions and declarations that lack quotation marks. Opener "Done With The Scene" and the more haunting "Sugarcoated" are synth-pop glides that peek at a sea of suburban rooftops through one Venetian blind. Depedro also explores his compatriot DJ/Rupture's territory with disjointed Middle Eastern hip-hop in "Hold it Together," along with delivering slightly skewed dancehall in "Phoenix Riddim" and "Banana Peel." *Resilience* places Depedro at a crossroads where it is high impossible to predict where he will go next. He points in nearly every direction here, and is richer for it. *Cameron Macdonald*

**FELIX LABAND
DARK DAYS EXIT**
Compost/GER/CD

Felix Laband may be the first star to emerge from South Africa's nascent electronic scene—having released two smallish albums on African Dope, he drew the notice of the Compost camp and this album demonstrates why. *Dark Days Exit* is an interesting blend of Latin, ambient, folk, and lounge flavors. The production and composition is top notch throughout, but check the choppy clicks of "Crooked Breath" or the eerie, melodic "Radio Right Now" for signs of true inspiration. A talent to watch. *Alexander Posell*



THE JUAN MACLEAN

**THE JUAN MACLEAN
LESS THAN HUMAN**
DFA/US/CD

Following a string of singles well received by both the clubs and the press, former Six Finger Satellite guitarist John Maclean makes his long-awaited LP debut on scene stalwart DFA, and fans will not be disappointed. *Less Than Human* features everything we've come to love about Maclean's productions—gritty dance beats, pulsating Italo-influenced basslines, '80s-style syn-toms, disco vocals, and rock & roll attitude. A perfect soundtrack for 2005—halfway through the first decade of the new millennium, Maclean has deconstructed, re-wired, and retrofitted an assortment of semi-ignored genres into post-post modernistic mayhem. Ironic? No, it's pure, unadulterated fun—the kind of no-holds-barred, balls-to-the-wall party jams that are so loose and juicy, so "fuck it and fuck you," they're positively punk rock. Now get out of my way—there's a party going on. *Alexander Posell*

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LUCIANO UPRIGHT
Kingston/GER/CD

LUCIANO HAIL THE COMFORTER
Jet Star/UK/CD
Jah works, indeed. Only with godly assistance would it seem possible for Luciano to be so prolific, releasing album after album with no sign of weariness. A one-man roots revival, Luchie comes correct on both of these new sets, whose sound frequently harks back to classic reggae. "It's a revelation of the situation," he sings on "What Goes On" from *Upright*, which could easily describe his impeccable phrasing and delivery. On "Music is Life," he's joined by Turbulence, and the two of them kill the "Murderer" riddim d(r)ead. *Hail the Comforter* similarly revisits many legendary riddims (such as "Rumors," which shows up on "Herb Minister") while "Too Greedy" with Anthony B. is a boomshot *fi real*. In head-to-head competition, *Upright* slightly edges out *Comforter*, but it's a miniscule margin of victory; either way you get 'nuff dispatches from the Messenger. *Eric K. Arnold*

MAETRIK CASI PROFUNDO
Treibstoff/GER/CD
Dallas producer Maetrik (Eric Estornel) follows up 2002's excellent *Quality Exertion* with another collection of acutely calibrated dance music. Throughout *Casi Profundo*, Maetrik balances experimental and functional tendencies like a champ. At times he harks back to Chain Reaction's cavernous, rippled-metal dub techno, but with more soulfulness and less turgidity. At other points, Maetrik slips into dirty electro mutations that make Gescom sound stodgy. He makes distortion sound sleek and infuses soul into warped tones. Maetrik's ability to leverage several strange sounds into a track while still keeping asses shaking is impressive. DJs should be bumpin' this LP for years. *Dave Segal*

MICHAEL MANNING PUBLIC
AI/UK/CD
Manning's stream of consciousness flows deep and clear, meandering into fresh territories with the unmistakable resilience of a young producer simultaneously attached and detached from his craft. From the wall-punching glitch-hop grit of "Today" and kaleidoscopic delay of "Sound Check" to the artificial serenity of "Cautionary Tale" and "Waiting for Closure," the album just drips with beauty throughout. The organic appeal of angelic female vocals, subtle atmospheres, and rich instrumentation is gently atomized by Manning's light cybernetic touch and cortex-tickling beat production in a manner that continues to make AI one of the most collectible electronic labels around. *Doug Morton*

MAYHEMYSTIC OUTBREAKS
Wide Hive/US/CD
As *Outbreaks*' opening track suggests, "Something is Happening" in San Francisco—namely, organic funk/jazz grooves, conscious lyrics, metaphysical poets, transcendent soul singers, nimble-fingered turntablists, and improv-minded instrumentalists. Guaranteed to expand your worldview while affirming your spirituality, this second effort by the Wide Hive collective's amalgamated group of iconoclasts, featuring vocalists Azeem (AlphaZeta) and Omega (Blackalicious, Afro-Mystik), proves almost as sublime as the first one. You'd have to be Donald Rumsfeld not to feel the message of "Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom, and Justice" or Laura Bush not to vibe with the anti-oil dub excursion "Black Gold" (which spotlights chant/sing master Tony Moses). *Outbreaks* might be more a listen-all-the-way-through joint than a case of two hot singles and 10 mediocre tracks, but it's time (mostly) well spent. *Eric K. Arnold*

MOBIUS BAND THE LOVING SOUNDS OF STATIC
Ghostly International/US/CD
Their creation myth (hick band moves to big city and writes about the adjustment, as laid out on their City VS Country EP) isn't all that fascinating but the band's sound is interesting enough at first to grab you, and by the last cut, "Do Wop," you've heard enough glockenspiel to buy their whole spiel. You can't help but notice the Weezer-like sincerity of Ben Sterling's vocals, though Jimmy Tamborello certainly comes to mind. In fact, their Postal Service-esque combination of electronics and emo completely works—in some cases even better because they're not as programmed as they are fucked up, as their languid sound proves. *Daniel Siewk*

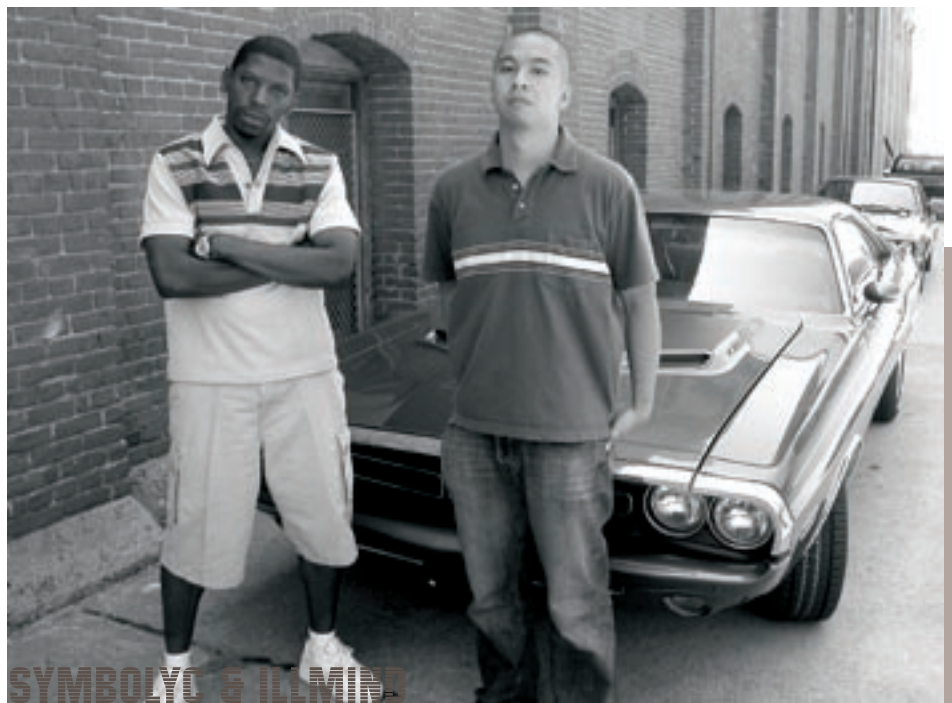
MORGAN HERITAGE FULL CIRCLE
VP/US/CD
In 1994, the Morgan family threatened to become the reggae Brady Bunch with their wack MCA debut. Fast-forward to 2005, and Morgan Heritage has become a leader in the roots-reggae revival. Featuring some of Jamaica's top producers (Bobby "Digital" Dixon, Donovan "Vendetta" Bennett) as well as self-produced titles, *Full Circle* offers a healthy diet of spiritual nourishment ("Jah Comes First"), optimistic messages ("One Day"), and political talking points ("Propaganda"). With each successive release, Morgan Heritage has elevated their inspirational sounds to the point where they've now earned the title "The Royal Family of Reggae." *James Mayo*

ODIORNE HEAVY WISH
File 13/US/CD
Former Mercury Rev drummer Jimy Chambers has been working on his Odiorne side project for over seven years now, and though it is just now debuting in the extended format, one can easily hear the years of hard work and studio experience that have gone into it. Equal parts Britpop, post punk, folk and shoegaze, "Heavy Wish" layers haunting synthetic strings, searing sound effects and shimmering production over punchy, heavy percussion. Highlights include piano-and-keys piece "Kino," which falls somewhere between Radiohead and My Bloody Valentine, and "Creature of Habit," which sounds like an ambient Beatles tune (I swear). With

multiple listens the album's subtle, experienced songwriting and sophisticated production sink in. *Alexander Posell*

OHMEGA WATTS THE FIND
Ubiquity/US/CD
Portland producer and rapper Ohmega Watts bears an uncanny resemblance to Dave Chappelle. It's oddly appropriate, because Watts' earthy, kickin-it-on-the-corner cuts would stand up well alongside the other music the comedian features on his hit show. On his debut *The Find*, Watts shows off his range, creating dusty RJD2 jams, spacey neo-soul swirls, and Jurassic 5 funk while working with a varied group of nearly 20 guest MCs. The fact that, for the most part, he effectively plays to the strengths of that many rappers underlines his versatility and skill. *Patrick Sisson*

O.U.O. OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN THAIONE DAVIS APRIL JANUARY
Domination/US/CD
O.U.O.'s unflinching faith in the power of hip-hop is so whole-hearted that this album might have been better suited to hip-hop's golden era than its diamond encrusted current condition. O.U.O. could use a little work on their lyrical hooks, which are pared down to the most honest and obvious of details, but generally their unique, danceable beats make up for this excessive



SYMBOLYC & ILLMIND

SYMBOLYC & ILLMIND THE ART OF ONEMIND
BBE/UK/CD
Long-distance music collaborations (see Foreign Exchange and Postal Service) have been hyped for their unorthodox approach to making music. But Texan Symbolyc One and New Jersey native Illmind make damn sure you know they're a geographically-challenged duo on their debut, *The Art of Onemind*, including a set of bland testimonials and work-related voicemails on the album. Who cares? But any momentary annoyance is alleviated by the sincere, shuffling set of polished tracks. A steady one-two kick sets the pace, augmented with warm keyboards, elevating string samples, and glittering, rubbery synths. It's just plain pretty production that doesn't require all the sweet-talking. *Patrick Sisson*



BOOZOO BAJOU

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over-earnestness. Taione Davis' all instrumental *April January* seems likewise out of place and time—Davis's reggae and jazz heavy album would vibe well at a dub night or a private party (that's right, this is sexual healing hip-hop). *Stacey Dugan*

**PARIS ZAX
UNPATH'D WATERS**

Alpha Pup/US/CD
A beer, a bowl, and a beat is all Paris Zax needs to take you to soundtrackville. But this ain't no blockbuster he's scoring (though he's got skills like Spielberg); we're talking a smoke-filled screen and an anamorphic-lensed classic. His noir notions were evident on his early work for Cal Arts student films, but the native Los Angeleno quickly found fans among the indigenous hip-hop scene, providing jazzy soundscapes for the likes of Busdriver, Blackbird, and The Shapeshifters. Paris is ready for his close-up and *Unpath'd Waters* is easily one of the best instrumental hip-hop/downtempo albums of the year. *Daniel Siwek*

**PRINCESS SUPERSTAR
MY MACHINE**

!K7-The Corrupt Conglomerate/GER/CD
Princess Superstar's never lacked chutzpah (subtlety, yes), so the "I wanna be famous" chorus on "Famous" rings true. But this album—a collision of hip-hop, electro, and punk rock—dissects fame more deeply, too; a "concept album," the tracks revolve around a future where PS clones herself repeatedly and takes over the celebrity world. Sometimes this works—the interludes are hilarious—and sometimes, with all the supposed time traveling, it's just confusing. One of the best tracks, "Quitting Smoking Song," doesn't even stick to the premise, but as long as she's this good, who cares? *Luciana Lopez*



**QNC
DUO DYNAMIC**

Grand Central/UK/CD
While they repped Strong Island to the fullest, the late '80s crew JVC Force was among the first hip-hop acts to find their core fanbase overseas. These days that's the norm for underground rap. It's particularly true for QNC, a duo featuring former JVC DJ/producer Curt Cazal (now also an MC) and Q Ball, a fellow Central Islip, NY MC whose voice sounds a whole lot like Jay-Z. On *Duo Dynamic*, the pair brings the heat '95-style—hard rhymes over hard beats—only now there's references to Irish girls asses and wilin' in Scotland, and their Manchester-based label is run by Mark Rae of Rae & Christian. Guru, M.O.P. and Camp Lo all make appearances but the heat is in the beats, produced by Cazal in the new home studio he's dubbed "D&D Studios East." *Jesse Serwer*

**ROGER ROBINSON
ILLCLECTICA**

Altered Vibes/UK/CD
After a decade as a poet and musician—during which he's collaborated with The Bug and Attica Blues, and toured with Cody Chesnutt and De La Soul—Roger Robinson has finally gotten around to recording a debut LP. His distinct spoken word rhymes, delivered in a hard-to-place accent that belies time spent in New York, London and Trinidad, underpin proceedings whilst Speeka's Rob Mac takes care of beats. "Nicola's Song" (think *Electric Circus*-era Common) and "Scars," the sole track featuring Robinson's surprisingly soft singing voice, are the choicest cuts. *Dave Stenton*

**RTB BIG BAND
WITH GUESTS**

Cosmic Sounds/UK/CD
**HIPNOSIS
CARROUSEL**
Perfect Toy/GER/CD
Since its inception in 1948, the Radio Television Belgrade jazz orchestra has established an award-winning reputation in its native Yugoslavia. Originally released in 1978, the 30th anniversary album of the *RTB Big Band and Guests* retains its freshness. Influences of '70s funk are prevalent here, standing proud and bold musically. Moving onto the present day, the young five-member Munich outfit Hipnosis dishes its sophomore album with gusto. *Carousel* is as assured and confident as can be, delivering straight-ahead jazz with warmth and soul. Both works serve jazz well. *Velanche*

**RUN_RETURN
METRO NORTH**

n5md/US/CD
Run_Return's dance club-worthy post-rock vacillates between textured electro nocturnes and a sitcom theme triumphalism as life affirming as Beethoven's Fifth. The Oakland trio trades off duties on all instruments: vibraphone, retro keyboards, and agile drumming, plus flanged banjo and skittering guitar. There's an odd tendency here to pair instruments with their synthetic counterparts—cellos against keyboard strings, handclaps against synth handclaps and, most admirably, the cut-up interplay between programmed beats and live drumming, as when a live drum break appears, *deux ex machina*, in the middle of a drum machine-backed song. *Ben Bush*

**WILL SAUL
SPACE BETWEEN**

Simple/UK/CD
As a DJ, Will Saul has always risked the wrath of the bores that dominate the UK breaks scene by flirting with other styles, chiefly house and techno. *Space Between* is an aural two fingers at those who preach the message of one style all night, and is all the better for it. "Mbira," "Copicat," and "Speak & Spell" demonstrate a range of influence, from Kevin Saunderson to Metro Area, and are likely to command the lion's share of DJ attention. The remaining downtempo numbers, peppered with contributions from guest vocalists including Ursula Rucker, ought to keep others happy too. *Dave Stenton*

**SAFETY SCISSORS
TAINTED LUNCH**

~scape/GER/CD
"Amnesia/I need ya/To remind me!" Matthew Curry croons on his latest joint. The San Franciscan is furthering the dorkcore sound he pioneered—now adding more intelligence and sexual tension to the dumbness through a golden voice that's a cross between Tina Turner and Al Green. Thankfully, he keeps things well-tempered (unlike Jamie Lidell) over a basic electro-pop formula that skitters and stutters into a vague dancehall groove at times. Nothing amnesic. *Cameron Macdonald*



**SKOPIC
SKOPIC**

Lunaticworks/US/CD
It doesn't sound promising: young bedroom producer combines a few instruments and a laptop, adopts a one-word pseudonym, and drops a debut disc of 15 mostly instrumental tunes. Surprise! Max Braverman, the lone soul behind Skopic, takes those 15 tracks and journeys deep into the dingy basements and forgotten corners of electronic music, twisting sounds both original and familiar into addictive new shapes. The self-titled album opens with "Allow Me," which starts with a Rhodes-streaked jazz shuffle that sounds like Amon Tobin in low gear, before turning on the old-school hip-hop afterburners then wrapping a violin around DSP. Skopic gets a huge, enveloping sound out of even his darker, more threatening tunes, dropping lo-fi spoken voice samples into the mix to contrast with his Jack Dangers-level skill. Braverman's bedroom odyssey takes us from the corpse of big beat to neo-blaxploitation turntablism to widescreen weirdo dancefloors and more—the scope alone of *Skopic* is pleasantly surprising. *Rob Geary*

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SQUIRREL AND THE ACES**

IN STORES 9/20/05

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**BIG TONE
THE DROUGHT**

IN STORES 10/4/05

"The Drought is my illmatic; it's My Reasonable Doubt."
- Big Tone

**MASPYKE
STATIC**

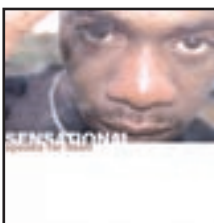
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"Maspyke always comes with that material you can feel."
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**SALOMÉ DE BAHIA
BRASIL**

Yellow-Tommy Boy/US/CD
As the summer heat fades, Salomé de Bahia comes through to keep the tropical fires burning. With production by Yellow boss Bob Sinclar, the singer best known for "Outro Lugar" sways and swaggers through standards like "Mas Que Nada" and a housed-up "Copacabana" with her signature vibrant, full-throated Portuguese propelling percussion- and horn-heavy arrangements. Despite a few schmaltzy missteps (like the overripe "Lança Perfume"), *Brasil* is an album of Latin and house tracks as big and bold as its namesake. *Peter Nicholson*



**SENSATIONAL
SPEAKS FOR ITSELF**

Quatermass/BEL/CD
Like MF Doom, Sensational rhymes in a mumble that follows its own internal metro-nome, often running boldly counter to our earthly sense of cadence. Even though he declares "Ain't no buzzin' in this/This is Protools, dog," Sensational's beats are skeletal arrangements of droning bass and muffled thumps, sometimes swerving into near-musique concrète territory. Neat tricks like the ominously doubled vocal track on "Obvious I'm Marvelous" go some way toward covering up Sensational's dearth of topics beyond braggadocio and his "chunk of bliss," and his oddly compelling voice works track-by-track, but *Speaks for Itself* still drags over 40 minutes. *Rob Geary*



**SHADOW HUNTAZ
VALLEY OF THE SHADOW**

Skam/UK/CD
Who knows how much of today's art and electronic music that projects fantastic,

hep and bleeding-cut visions of the future will be feted as tomorrow's kitsch? That thought arose when I sat through the latest joint by leftfield hip-hop cosmonaut unit Shadow Huntaz. The multi-city crew continues to stress rap as if they pulled an all-nighter reading Philip K. Dick and William Gibson paperbacks with heads full of acid. Sure, the IDM-tinged production gets some bonus points, especially the suave acid techno of "Y" and "Deander," but *Valley* may soon seem as quaint as the Epcot Center's World of Tomorrow ride. *Cameron Macdonald*

**SLUM VILLAGE
PREQUEL TO A CLASSIC**

Deep Space Media/US/CD
Detroit-based Slum Village has gone through many incarnations over the past decade, but emerges fit and trim for their latest "mixtape" collection. Calling it so is odd since every track is by T3 and Elzhi, but no matter—they continue a smart blend of intelligent street slang fused with R&B hooks, jazzy synth lines and, of course, juiced up and heady bass. *Prequel* is a fitting title, as nothing on the record progresses beyond what has kept them at the helm of underground headnods. If you've enjoyed thus far, this is more of the same—"classic" as in "old," not necessarily "necessary." *Derek Beres*

**THE SMALL AXE PEOPLE AND DENNIS ALCAPONE
JUST VERSION**

Small Axe People/UK/CD
Who are The Small Axe People? Those familiar with reggae publications will already be acquainted with the UK's *Small Axe*, the brainchild of committed enthusiast Ray Hurford and one of the very first reggae magazines ever in print. Though *Small Axe* now only exists online, Hurford has furthered his reggae explorations through a series of individually peculiar releases, of which *Just Version* is the latest. This set brings new meaning to the idea of minimalism, with Hurford's keyboard tinkling creating a platform for snippets of deejay chatter by the legendary Dennis Alcapone; intriguing and unexpected, it will grow on careful listeners. *David Katz*

**DWIGHT TRIBLE AND THE LIFE FORCE TRIO
LOVE IS THE ANSWER**

Ninja Tune/US/CD
Everything about this album is placid, from Dwight Trible's minimalist expressions to the psychedelic and occasionally tribal sounding jazz and funk provided by Madlib, Jay Dee, Sa-Ra Creative Partners, et al. *Love Is The Answer* often sounds like it was pulled directly out of a dusty crate from the late '60s—the hippie-esque theme of "peace, unity, love and having fun" is a common one here (as is the overall deep-rooted quality of the production). However, in 2005, some listeners may not appreciate Trible's offbeat spouting, good-natured vocals, and overall idealism. *Max Herman*

**TRIO EXCLUSIV
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

Klein/GER/CD
This Viennese combo—drummer Mex Wolfsteiner, trumpeter Richie Klammer, and guitarist Franz Reisecker (with multi-instrumentalist Martin Zrost) invokes nostalgia with accomplished disco-jazz on *International Standards*, using guest vocalists to further invigorate grooves that are anything but dusty. Their clean, funky production segues seamlessly from aperitifs in the hotel lobby (where Austrian Louie Austen channels Sinatra over the car-chase frenetics of "Honalee") to the handclap-filled dancefloor of G. Rizo's "A Time to Feel" to a nightcap in the leisure suite with Terry Callier, soulful and robust as ever on "Slo-Mo" and its dub redux. *International Standards* is exclusive swank that the masses should hear. *Rachel Shimp*

**ZUCO 103
WHAA!**

Six Degrees/US/CD
Take the title as a passionate cry of joy, or a question in the form of an imperative. Zuco 103's new disc can only be expressed in semi-nonsensical verbalizations: part Afrobeat/bossa nova drive, part electronic thump, part soul-injected jazz funk rave-up, and part studio dub workout (complete with two typically unpredictable contributions from Lee "Scratch" Perry). The Amsterdam-via-Brazil group is better known for more direct electro-bossa; while that's still here—along with Lillian Vieira's sunny vocals—*Whaa!* proves Zuco capable of exploring a range of musical possibilities with both youthful energy and intimate subtlety. *Justin Hopper*



**AMUSEMENT PARKS ON FIRE
AMUSEMENT PARKS ON FIRE**

Filter/US/CD
Welcome to the new millennium's wall of sound. It may not carry the pioneering gravitas of My Bloody Valentine's hallmark album *Loveless*, but that's just because technology has gotten heavier in the last decade. In other words, Amusement Parks on Fire's debut effort is both a nod to the shoegaze metaverse of the past as well as a new century experiment in glossy noise rawk. That's why thunderous anthems like "Eighty-Eight" and its eight-minute counterpart "Wiper" bleed so heavily into each other, but still sound clean enough to eat. Sure, things slow down for dirges like "The Ramones Book" and "23 Jewels" but the roof is indeed on Fire, and all the gearheads are trapped underneath. *Scott Thill*

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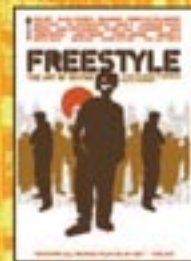
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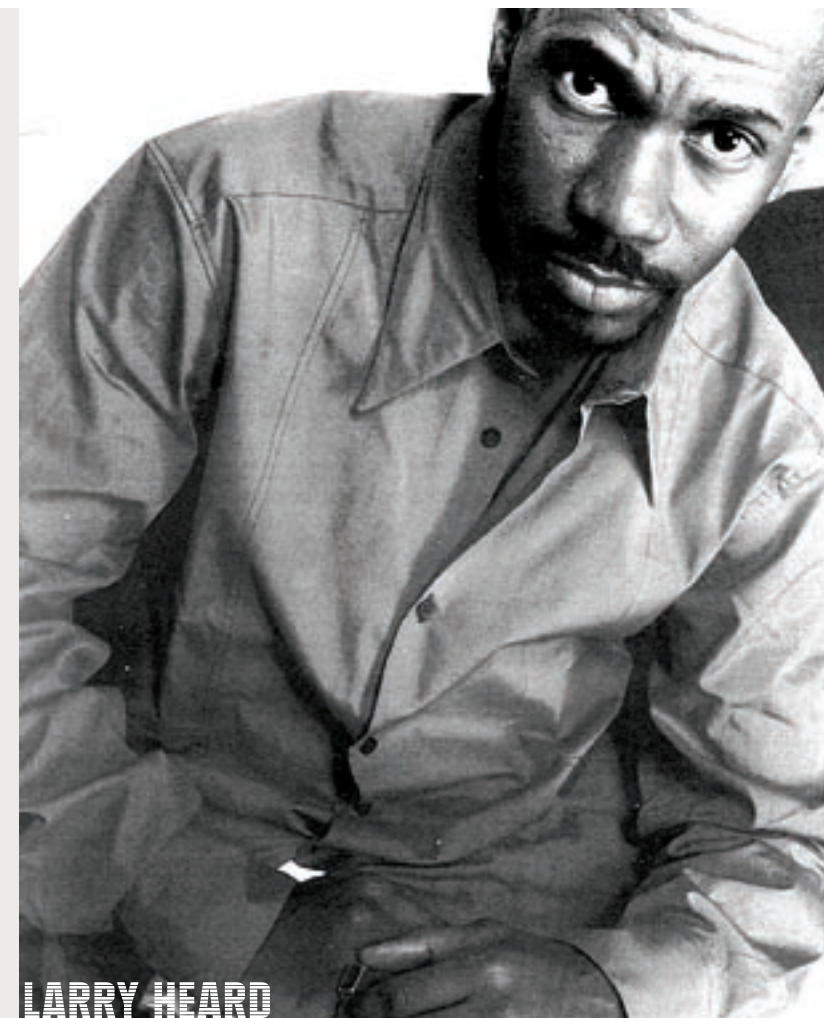
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LARRY HEARD

COMP REVIEWS

ACID: CAN YOU JACK?
Soul Jazz/UK/CD

**ATOM PRESENTS ACID
(EVOLUTION 1988-2003)**
Logistic/FRA/CD



**TWO NEW COMPS
FURTHER DEFINE ACID
HOUSE'S LEGACY.**

With the ashes of the "disco sucks" record burning in Chi-Town's Comisky Park, lovers of dance music went underground, where their only respite from the racist reaction was all-night house parties. They were down but not out; as Tim Lawrence (writer of disco history book *Love Saves The Day*) explains in the liner notes for *Acid: Can You Jack?*, house music was "disco's revenge." Like the Knights Templar or the Freemasons, the banned disco culture sublimated the scene under the guise of building a house. Brick by brick the genre introduced the Roland 808 drum machine, replaced lush string arrangements with staccato synths, and even snuck in some maligned divas.

But if house music was about renovation, then acid house was about tearing the shit down and starting all over. The new wave of Chicago producers made music from their bedroom—no room for musicians, only plastic boxes like the Roland TB303. Tweaked knobs made blips and squelches that would repulse the likes of Thelma Houston. The sounds made were more familiar to computer printers and automated production lines; fitting, considering the industrial city that Chicago was and its proximity to Motor City, where they already Metropolized (updated) Motown and the motorbooty.

In fact, acid house is almost as much Detroit techno as it is Chicago house. Players like Phuture (DJ Pierre and Spanky) and Marshall Jefferson (a.k.a. Sleazy DJ) weren't interested in updating the "The Sound of Philadelphia" as much as they wanted to make a brand new sound—witness tracks like

"Phuture Jacks" and "I've Lost Control," just a few of the classics included in the two-disc set.

Acid: Can You Jack? resembles a playlist from the Music Box, Ron Hardy's legendary club. It features classic tunes that mostly appeared on the Trax or DJ International labels, with the addition of modern concoctions like "Acid Bass" by Roy Davis JNR. or "Explorer" by Green Velvet/Cajmere.

A few years later, avant garde artists like Genesis P-Orridge—thinking "acid" referred to LSD—combined the jack with the Union Jack and some '60s psychedelia to put the movement in a whole new context. Psychic TV's *Jack The Tab* (1988) was put out by Temple, "the original home of UK acid house," and their 12-inch, "Tune In (Turn On Thee Acid House)" introduced a more cosmic and industrial side of acid. That's where Atom Heart's *Acid: Evolution 1988-2003* comes in.

If the Soul Jazz collection centers on the American output from 1985 on, then Logistic Records capitalizes on Pink Floyd-inspired European movements. Under a variety of aliases, Uwe Schmidt (Atom Heart) has taken European acid from graffiti to fractals to a sound that borders on trance. In fact, Atom's "Little Grey Box" is a sturdy bridge between Chicago house and Frankfurt's Harthouse sound, and Fume's "Jack2000" is a display of where acid was going in the new millennium. Atom's collection follows what happened when acid left its home, in a culture that feared bisexuality, for a continent that almost preferred it. *Daniel Sivek*



Eric Bahaire

REBOOT

Om/US/CD

The lack of social awareness in electronic music has long been a weak point of the genre. Not that activism isn't present in the scene, but it's rarely been marketed as such. Enter *reBoot*, a collaboration between SF's Om records and NextAid. Co-founded by activist Lauren Segal, the LA-based organization's mission is to inspire grassroots AIDS awareness within the global dance community and further sustainable development programs to help the millions of children orphaned by the deadly virus, the overwhelming majority of whom are in Africa. It's not only a good cause, it's a good record, whose tone is set early on with Thievery Corporation's "Truth and Rights," a rebellious slice of righteous, bubbly ragga dub featuring Sleepy Wonder. The rest of the album contains above-average tracks from Om's usual suspects (Kaskade, Marques Wyatt with Gina Rene, Mark Farina, and Afro-Mystik), as well as strong cuts from Louie Vega, Jeremy Sole's *Musaics* featuring Garth Trinidad, and Miguel Migs. *reBoot* makes it easy to get up, get into it, and get involved. *Eric K. Arnold*



BAR BHANGRA

Escondida-Ultra/US/CD

GlobeSonic DJ Fabian Alsaltany compiles a finely mixed bhangra compilation for the States, bringing the hectic Punjabi stylings of London and India to American dancefloors. This seamlessly threaded 15-track compilation is an archeological finding in future music where hip-hop-based production is combined with *dhol* and *tumbri*. Including Panjabi MC—who shot this style overseas with his Jay-Z collaboration—as well as bass-heavy cuts by the MIDival PunditZ, TJ Rehmi and Swami, *Bar Bhangra* serves as both welcome introduction and sonic document of what is to come. *Derek Beres*

DAMIAN LAZARUS: SUCK MY DECK

Resist/Bugged Out/UK/CD

Lazarus deserves credit for bringing underground-ish electronic music to wider audiences; he blends established indie techno artists with promising upstarts and leftfield selections while keeping things bumpin' in sizable clubs. *Suck My Deck* (guffaw) finds Lazarus embracing moody, old-school Euro trance, shimmering minimal techno, tripnotic tech-house, a peak-time Alter Ego banger remixed by Ewan Pearson, dubbed-out rock weirdness by The Stranglers, and Superpitcher's majestic, soft-focus techno remix of M83. Idiosyncratically updating the old cliché about DJs taking you on a journey, Lazarus—and his deck—earn your suction. *Dave Segal*

DJ CRAZE: MIAMI HEAT

System/US/CD

DJ Craze may be renowned for his body-trick-heavy DJ routines, but as his new mix album proves, he's far from being all show. On *Miami Heat*, Craze captures the high-powered pulse of his city as he sews together two-dozen top drum & bass tracks with a sprinkling of his trademark turntablism. While he does lay down some precise cuts here and there, Craze more often utilizes this mix to showcase his ear for quality music (in this case d&b) and his ability to keep the high-BPM rhythm steady. *Max Herman*

ELEKTRONISCHE MUSIK—INTERKONTINENTAL 4

Traum/GER/CD

While Kompakt explores the pop-and-dancefloor side of minimal techno, Traum's *Elektronische Musik* posse takes micro into the quiet nighttime and finds a cheerfully mellow side to the music. Adam Kroll hits us early with "Aeugler," a space-dub-inflected chugger that breaks into a sprightly melody before fracturing into *schaffe*-licious bits. A few tracks vanish into tastefulness fit for a Pier One store soundtrack, but all 11 minutes of Nathan Fake's "Dinamo" are compelling, from the Herbert-ish cut-up blips and mechanical stops and starts to the climactic acid storm. Well-crafted and occasionally brilliant listening for the post-dancefloor wee hours. *Rob Geary*

THE FAMILY FILES VOL. 2

Shaman Work/US/CD

Atlanta- and Los Angeles-based Shaman Work Recordings compiled this official mix tape in support of upcoming hip-hop releases by MF Doom, Emanon, Wale Oyejide and Stacy Epps, among others. The compilation is a mixed bag of b-sides, rough and unfinished tracks, freestyles, remixes, and unreleased goodies. MF Doom makes a brief appearance, and so does Stacy Epps, but mostly this should just be called the Emanon show, because they are all over this album—almost to an excessive degree. If you are an Emanon fan, this is the mix for you. *Stacey Dugan*

FAUNA FLASH: WORX THE REMIXES

Compost/GER/CD

The Compost label gives us all another reason to smile, letting the Fauna Flash boys loose with this superbly mixed collection of their own remixes from the past few years. Things kick off on a spacey acoustic tip with the FF remix of "Flowers" by Roberto Di Gioia's Marsmobil, sliding smoothly into the subterranean jazz pulses of Fon-Kin's "Montininja" before their global house sound takes over completely. The rippling *cabasa* shuffles of Rivera Rotation's "Delicado," Grupo Batuque's Afro-Brazilian football anthem "Ole Ola," and even some retooled Hidden Agenda all get woven into the lively Fauna flow. This is one spicy meatball. *Doug Morton*

THE FREE DESIGN: THE NOW SOUND REDESIGNED

Light in the Attic/US/CD

Soft-psych cult faves The Free Design chose that moniker for their first release, an album brimming over with boundless enthusiasm and melodies to match. Despite The Free Design never having achieved large-scale commercial success, the remixers that Light in the Attic has assembled for this release pay testament to the influence of this quartet. Madlib, Caribou, Koushik, Dangermouse, and more all take their turns reinterpreting the sonorous sounds of the originals, while Nobody lovingly curates the entire collection with spliced samples of dialogue and musical interludes. *Brock Phillips*

JACK RUBY HI-FI

NINEY THE OBSERVER: SUFFERATION: THE DEEP ROOTS REGGAE

Auralux/UK/CD

We've got the makings of a cataclysmic, I mean, a catastrophic clash here! First, Jack Ruby gets some post-mortem love as *Hi-Fi* (a reissue of the Clapper label's 1980 comp) gets perfectly remastered off vinyl. The set features four vocal masterpieces (featuring lover Ken Booth and chanter Jah Coller) and their appropriate dub addendums; heavier, more religious dub you won't find anywhere, with meditations clocking around 10 minutes. Niney's compilation exhibits the same longing and agony ("Repatriation") but these are crafted cuts, not dub jams, and while essential to any collection (for The Rockstones alone) *Sufferation* is not as life-altering as Ruby's Ocho Rios-based productions. Babylon watch out! *Daniel Sivek*

JOEY NEGRO & SEAN P: THE SOUL OF DISCO

Z/UK/CD

MASTERS AT WORK: THE KINGS OF HOUSE

BBE/UK/CD

The history of dance music is as fluid as ocean surf. Styles flourish and then dead-end like dark alleys only to be rediscovered and remixed years later. *The Soul of*

Disco is filled with such historical refugees, tracks tossed to the side and forgotten; herein, Joey Negro and Sean P unearth solid numbers located on the boundary between funk and disco. Despite the constantly changing nature of dance culture, it's still useful to compile a historical compilation, if only to re-evaluate influences. With *The Kings of House*, Masters at Work does a standup job of presenting a disparate selection of mostly '80s cuts by Derrick May, Blaze, and Frankie Knuckles, forming an overview of house music influences from the decade. *Patrick Sisson*

KALK SEEDS: A KARAOKE KALK COMPILATION

Karaoke Kalk/GER/CD

What happens when a video included on a CD distracts you from its actual songs? Pluramon's intoxicating "White Eyes" did just that—vertical strips of blurred colors flicker in time to what sounds like the ghost of a rambling Doors jam faithfully complemented by Morrison-like bad poetry. Nonetheless, this Cologne label's otherwise charming comp of abstract pop ranges from digitally ripened bluegrass (Sora & Wechsel Garland's infectious "Spring") to cute, lysergic bastardizations of Amerikun country & western (Poto & Cabengo's "Suevian Rhapsody"). *Cameron Macdonald*

MARK RAE: ODE TO A DYING DJ

Trust the DJ/UK/CD

Mixes from Mark Rae—one half of Mancs Rae & Christian, known for producing *Northern Sulphuric Soul* on Rae's Grand Central label—mixes always have the cocksure strut of a blaxploitation film, and *Dying DJ* is no different, especially when he throws down Cecile's "Hot Like We," Fingathing's "Walk in Space," and ARP's "Dirty Shirt." Clapping hip-hop, buttery broken beat, hazy funk, earthy ska, dub, and dancehall all get their due as Rae takes this opportunity to nice up the dance, his trunk-rattling, skanking selections bridging a gap from classic toasting to A Tribe Called Quest-vibe MCing. *Tony Ware*

SOUL HEAVEN PRESENTS BLAZE

Defected/UK/CD

Sometimes "just what you expected" is exactly what you want: for example, the hands-in-the-air, keep-the-summer-alive vibe fest of *Soul Heaven Presents Blaze*. The venerable New Jersey DJ/production duo digs up and mixes two CDs of deep, soulful, Latin- and Afro-tinged house from the likes of Jon Cutler, Louie Vega, Truby Trio and, of course, Blaze. Those seeking surprises or new directions will be sorely disappointed, but Shelter-heads searching out another night of sweat-drenched healing will give thanks for this minor paradise. *Justin Hopper*

SOUTHPORT WEEKENDER VOL. 3

suSU/UK/CD

Dimitri from Paris shines on this three-disc set, with great pacing and mixing that highlights eminently danceable vocal-leaning house. Quentin Harris, the Detroit-born hip-hop artist turned New York house remixer/producer, contributes a more laid-back disc. But it's Jazzie B who delivers the best programming, a mix of soulful classics from luminaries like Roy Ayers, James Brown, and Marvin Gaye (and Jazzie's own Soul II Soul) and the occasional more modern cut, like two tracks from Wookie ("Down on Me" and, with Lain, "Battle"). Not always as smooth as it could be, the set nonetheless offers plenty. *Luciana Lopez*

TSUNAMI RELIEF

Exploding Hearts/GER/CD

Proceeds from this album of unreleased tracks from the micro and tech-house arenas of Deutschland benefit an orphanage in Indonesia affected by last year's tsunami tragedy, rendering Sascha Funke's "Tears On My Pillow" bittersweet despite its clinical execution. If Andre Galluzzi & Guido Schneider's "Survivor" is the dizzy sound of sifting through the rubble, Dirt Crew's "Let's Get it Done" is an upbeat insistence to begin rebuilding structures and lives. With Richie Hawtin, Swayzak, and Ellen Allien in tow, these are consoling sentiments from not the most comforting of genres. *Rachel Shimp*

VERSION EXCURSION

Counterpoint/UK/CD

Counterpoint has over 10 years of experience putting together killer compilations like *Disco Juice* and *Jazz Bizniz*. Rest assured their producer buddies (Yam Who?, Beatfanatic) had plenty to work with when turned loose in the vaults for this collection of re-versions. There's a little bit of everything, from the choppy, gloriously spastic vocals of Les Gammas' take on Sheila Landis' broken beat "Parenthe-Seizure" to a typically slick and swaying Nicola Conte bossa remix of Sunaga T Experience's "It's You." But everything meshes together nicely with a shared jazz/dance sensibility that emphasizes chops as much as beats. *Peter Nicholson*

VIOLENCE: WELCOME TO VIOLENCE

Violence/US/CD

MALDINI & VEGAS PRESENT BAD TASTE

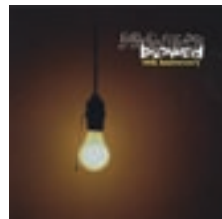
BC/UK/12

The first full-length from San Francisco-based Violence is a refreshing showcase of the multiple personalities of crew members Hive, Keaton, Gridlok, and Echo. Often known for snarling evil, Gridlok turns in "Mass Transit," an aural dodge 'em of stressed out snares and free jazz horns; other combinations generate the G-funk-meets-blaxploitation skank of "California Schemin'" and "Science," which journeys from vocal down-tempo to futuristic machine madness in seven minutes. While *Welcome To Violence* is a coup for d&b programming, Maldini and Vegas' compilation *Bad Taste* suffers from its different producers trying too hard to emulate Bad Company's signature sound. Though the record contains melodic drama and cinematic synths for days (especially Body & Soul's "Blow Out" and State of Mind's "Different Strokes") it could benefit from a few more innovative bass sounds and a few less techno tearouts. *Star Eyes*

YOUNG LIONS VOL. 1

Jet Star/UK/CD

This collection shines a spotlight on Richie Spice, Jah Cure, Chuck Fenda, and I Wayne, the hottest new artists to hit the dancehall arena since the mid-'90s renaissance that brought Capleton, Buju Banton, and Luciano to prominence. All of these artists share similar subject matter, but sheer talent overcomes the lack of thematic variation. Both the Spice/Fenda collaboration "Freedom" and I-Wayne's debut hit "Living In Love" are already classics, perhaps soon to be joined by Spice's "Mekey Burn" and Cure's "I Have A Dream" (both of which reprise Jacob Miller's "Tenement Yard"), and I-Wayne's "Rome A Crumble"—which strikes a balance between modern production and traditional Rasta themes. *Eric K. Arnold*



PROJECT BLOWED: 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Decon/US/CD

The Good Life Café arguably served as the most important platform for MCs from L.A. and beyond to express themselves live (albeit cuss-free) in the early '90s. But when the momentum of the Good Life died down some of its top alumni (Aceyalone, Mikah 9, Abstract Rude and company) went on to form their own weekly meeting place in South Central called Project Blowed. Ever since then, this mass of immensely creative MCs has had the West Coast underground on lock and *Project Blowed: 10th Anniversary* is a testament that the uninhibited spirit of the Blowedians hasn't faltered a bit. Like the original, self-titled 1995 compilation, this collection showcases a variety of new (Customer Service) and old (Aceyalone) material from these wild-styled MCs, accompanied by bouncy yet off-the-wall beats. With 20-plus engaging tracks of unadulterated hip-hop, Project Blowed continues to provide a creative outlet like none other. *Max Herman*



TECHNO GUEST REVIEWS: DAMIAN LAZARUS

Ah, Damian Lazarus. With quick wit and impeccable, unpredictable taste, this rebel is shaking up the somewhat dire UK techno scene with a dose of attitude. But Lazarus ain't no electroclash fly-by-night. He kicks out jams from the likes of Freaks, Villalobos, Ewan Pearson, and Superpitcher—you know, all the electro-house and nouveau acid you can shake your cheeks to. And, when he's not ripping up Sonar or releasing mix CDs like his June 6 installment of *Bugged Out Presents Suck My Deck*, Mr. Lazarus is the proprietor of his own label, Crosstown Rebels. After a searing summer of tracks by Silversurfer, Rayon, and Mish Mash, CR drops a dope album from Chilean Pier Bucci this month as well as singles from Hiem and Frankie Flowerz. In between all this excitement, Lazarus nevertheless found time to pen us some thoughts on the best techno around. *Tyra Bangs*
www.crosstownrebels.com

DUOTEQUE YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT DRUGS Boxer/GER/12
Personally, I know nothing about drugs, so when this record arrived at my door I was very interested to find out what it was all about. It turns out that there are these little pill things that people take and it makes them go nuts when they hear heavy, heavy basslines and dark, brooding beats set against fucked up chugging drum sounds. I'm happy I learnt something from this fresh killer track. *DL*

ARGY LOVE DOSE (LUCIANO REMIX) Pokerflat/GER/12
If you're looking for the sound of the future, Pokerflat just dealt it out. I road-tested this baby at the opening of DC10 in Ibiza in June and this guy had a heart attack and passed away. Whilst he will be sadly missed, this record will have a very long life. Maximum energy for the new techno revolution. *DL*

JAUMETIC LAGRIMAL (INAKI MARIN REMIX) Software/SPA/12
At a recent new music seminar, loosely based on the peace talks at Camp David, it was decided that this track would be the important record that brings together the warring factions of trance, techno, house, and electro. The controversial "Road to Acid-House" peace plan was duly signed and this track was played at the grand ceremony celebrations. The future looks bright for the underground. *DL*

MOSSA
SLAVERY WHEN WET
Orac/US/12
ADJUNCT VOLUME 1
Adjunct Audio/US/12

Mossa's minimal techno has a severe case of digital indigestion. Random samples hiccup and burp obscenely and a coarse, bubbly throb is about all that's left of the rhythm. It's beautiful sickness. Ben Neville hitches the tempo up on his remix, which is the stuff of rattling ribcages and bad E trips. Producers [a]pendics.shuffle, Pheek, John Tejada, and Bruno Pronso are the all-star line up on Ken Gibson's new Adjunct Audio label. Tejada's track blends acid squiggles with early As One melodic techno; Gibson, alias [a], shuffle, delivers dubby glitch beats with aplomb. *Devin Ross*

JAY DENHAM
BLACK NITES 2.0
Equator/UK/12
Detroit native Denham has released tracks by Gayle San on his own Black Nation label; now San returns the favor with this release on his label from Denham. Big Jay is known for no-nonsense tracks that barrel down the freeway like an Escalade doing 90. "100 Years Later" and "Shadows" temper the relentless drum programming with subtle samples and distant synth fragments that pierce through the thick, percussive exhaust like fractals of sunlight through a cracked industrial roof. *Derek Grey*

ETIOP
EVOLUTION
Recognition/POL/12
PHEEK
OUT OF CONFUSION
Tic Tac Toe/DEN/12
The minimal techno flag flies proudly in Europe's north and east. ETIOP—a 26-year-old from Plock, Poland—shows his hip-hop (and videogame) influ-

ences on tracks that jump, bleep and fire like Mario shooting at Space Invaders in the sky. "Evolution"'s vibrant melodic nuances shed much needed light on the somewhat constipated rhythms. Meanwhile, techno from Canada's Pheek sounds like walking through a huge granite cave with cold drips falling from icicles on the ceiling. Sounds bounce of the walls and disappear into the darkness on your journey inward. *Tomas Palermo*

TERRACE
CITY SOUNDS
Evo Lute/NETH/12
Electronic vet Stefan Robers creates music inspired by Red James sleeve art in what's to be a four-part series on Evo Lute. Robers' Detroit and ambient techno influences interconnect on five delicately hued synth-dance chronicles. *Derek Grey*

KLEMENT BONELLI
ETHNA
Deeplay Soultec/SWE/12
Like Dennis Ferrer and Jerome Sydenham's dancefloor redefining "Sandcastles," "Ethna" is sonic revolution incarnate. With stellar remix assistance by Wave Music artist D'Malicious, French producer Klement Bonelli has created a sound full of sophisticated rawness, and these techy and soulful bits will appeal to tech and house heads yearning for a better musical future. One of '05's essential tunes. *Scott Edmonds*

PASCAL FEOS
I CAN FEEL THAT
Omychron/GER/12
Pascal FEOS introduces his peak-time techno imprint with remixes from a few of the world's heaviest hitters. The label is a platform for sultry yet pounding groove-style techno, as illustrated by Speedy J's in your face remix and Tony Rohr's fascinating festival of clicks. Diverse and dancefloor compatible. *Praxis*

ACTUAL JAKSHUN
SEQUENTIAL CIRCUS
Minus/CAN/12
Originally released on Incomplet, these rare tracks were hibernating until Minus gave them a new home. Almost all of the sounds used on this release were produced using a Sequential Circuits Studio 440, fusing drum programming, sequencing, and sampling into one machine. Although the effort is innovative at best, this blend of rim shots and clap snaps is a bit outdated by today's technology standards. Minimize to maximize? *Praxis*

BRIAN ANEURYSM
DAS ELEMENT DES MENSCHEN
Spectral Sound/US/12
A warehouse workhorse, "Unwanted" is the gem on this debut release by Brian Aneurysm (an alias of producer Bernhard Pucher). Similar to, but not quite as clever as early Cybotron or Mr. Fingers' releases, the James T. Cotton version of "Das Element Des Menschen" regressively acquaints new listeners with the groove that Jack built. Fans of Tangent Beats and Tuning Spork will enjoy this release for its diverse musical approach. *Scott Edmonds*

RHYTHM MAKER
EVERY NOW AND AGAIN
Background/GER/12
Directing the label back towards dance-oriented late night music; Stefan Schwander (a.k.a. Repeat Orchestra, Rhythm Maker) enlists a well-tuned Hammond B3 and a slew of emotional chord pads on these smooth tracks. Like a true pianist, he styles the melodies into structured progressions while the percussion gives the music an organic touch. *Praxis*

fabric23 ivan smagghe



Out Now

'Fabric 23: Ivan Smagghe' is a typically individual mix from the Parisian DJ. Audion, The Kills, Michael Mayer, Booka Shade and Ada collide in a full-on fusion of electro, techno, acid, and rock.



FABRIC LIVE 23

Available 13th September

An atmospheric dancefloor mix blending cutting edge minimal techno with heavy Death In Vegas productions. Quick mixes build the moods and grooves of this elegant 4/4 selection, featuring tracks from Mathew Jonson, Wighnomy Brothers, Alex Smoke and Solvent.

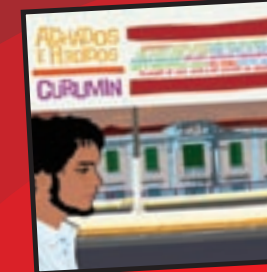
Forthcoming artists in the series: Rob Da Bank, Diplo, Stanton Warriors, Tiefschwarz, Plump DJs, Ricardo Villalobos.

Available on compact disc from all good stores or for £6 by subscribing to the series via the fabric website:

www.fabriclondon.com



AP/CI
Thank For Asking
AP/CI fuses a broad range of influences from 70s Krautrock to 80s hip-hop to 90s indie rock (but we don't mean that in a Cake kind of way). Live instrument co-mingle with glitch-laden driving beats over which AP/CI craft erudition play counterpoint to punchy rascally chatter and cacophonous wail. (Quannum)



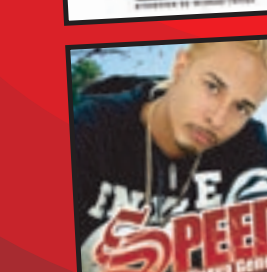
CURUMIN
Achados e Perdidos
João Paulo, Curumin, presents his US debut album *Achados e Perdidos*. Recalling 70s ramba funk at its best, Achados e Perdidos channels musical greats like Jorge Ben, Milton Nascimento and Tim Maia, but peppered with modern flourishes. (Quannum)



GENERAL ELEKTRIKS
Cliquety Klique
GE's sound combines live instrumentation and programmed electronic elements, all orchestrated by AV. Imagine Blackalicious sans MCs on tour in Place Pigalle and you're half way there. (Quannum)



MICHAEL RÜTTEN
Soulsearching
The Compost Radio Show
14 hot tracks in between Hip Hop, Afrobeat, Soul, House, Jazz and Funk. (Compost)



SPEEDY
Nueva Generacion
Hailing out of Puerto Rico, his new album *Nueva Generacion* has catapulted him to stardom in Europe and beyond. Includes the hot new single, "Sentelo" featuring Lumidee (as seen on MTV), as well as a guest appearance from Daddy Yankee. *Nueva Generacion* is a collection of killer tracks that show Speedy's sharp lyricism and infectious beats. (Sequence)



TIMO MAAS
Pictures
Timo Maas, one of the world's hottest DJs, is back with a killer collection of tunes on his new album *Pictures*. Featuring guest appearances from Placebo's Brian Molko, Hellie Neneh Cherry, and more. Also includes the addictive new single, "First Day." This album has been well worth the wait. Give it a spin today! (Ultra)

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360 Vinyl & Clothing - Portland • Twist & Shout - Denver

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HOUSE GUEST REVIEWS: BOB SINCLAR

The “French house” sound may be as old as last month’s *fromage*, but pioneering Parisian DJ/producer Chris The French Kiss has moved on. Way on. After picking up the moniker Bob Sinclar from French spy movie *Le Magnifique* in the late ‘90s—then creating club anthems “Gym Tonic” and “I Feel For You” and co-founding the Yellow imprint—Sinclar has displayed an obsession with bringing African music to the Western world. The May 24th release of his *Africanism III* compilation, which pairs the likes of Afrobeat drummer Tony Allen and Nigerian singer Ben Onono with house producers David Guetta and Tim Deluxe, continues his commitment to Afrohouse and marks the start of a multiple album deal with hip-hop stalwart Tommy Boy Records. The Yellow/Tommy Boy pairing also brings to the world Paris-based Brazilian chanteuse Salomé de Bahia, and a forthcoming Sinclar artist album due out in January 2006. We tracked down this feather-haired dandy and asked him about the *ne plus ultra* of current house releases. *Samantha Morgan*
www.bobsinclar.com

KERRI CHANDLER BAR A THYM Nite Grooves/US/12

I’ve always liked Kerri’s productions. The first time I heard this at the 2005 Winter Music Conference I thought it had a great vibe to it—simple production, great drum, killer bassline and pure Kerri! One of my favorite tracks of the summer! *BS*

JAMIE LEWIS NOT TOO SHABBY (JAMIE LEWIS GOES DISCO MIX) Purple Music/SWI/12

Jamie astonishes us this time with his cover of this Cerrone classic. A swinging track that makes my dancefloor smile with a funky baseline and catchy disco vocals. Love it! *BS*

MARTIN SOLVEIG JEALOUSY Universal Music/FRA/12

Again, my good friend Martin did a really massive job. Every time I play this track in the clubs it’s a huge success. A mix of pure house with a heavy bassline and a touch of pop and rock. I’ll definitely be spinning this all summer. *BS*

BOOKA SHADE

MANDARINE EP

Get Physical/GER/12

Shifting away from their more esoteric and dizzying sounds, the production duo of Walter Merziger and Arno Kammemeier has created one for the dancer in all of us. “Point Break” is a rude groove that bubbles with deeply syncopated repetition, while “Mandarine Girl” is a mélange of tweaked melodic realizations and progressive synth lines. Fans of Pokerflat and Palette will definitely dig this one. *Scott Edmonds*

WHOMADEWHO

ROSES

Gomma/GER/12

FUJIYA & MIYAGI

CONDUCTOR 71

Tirk/UK/12

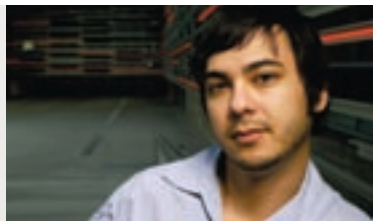
Making bands like The Rapture and The Bravery sound like effete posers, WhoMadeWho’s “Roses” slaps together electric bass guitars, thinking kick drums and perfectly off-kilter punk funk revelry. This is the best band-cum-house music this side of !!!’s authentic fuck-off-and-dance sounds. Fujiya & Miyagi are a little more on the Gary Numan/Wire tip, but they make my ears swoon; their tunes are not a rip-job, but inspired retro dance music for lights-out living room fiestas. *Hector Cedillo*

STRANGER

YOU + ME

Stranger Music/US/12

Holed up in Sacramento at audio engineering school, Deep Fuzz/Barfly main man Ben Cook still had time to launch a new label and alias. The original is disco-tas-



BREAKS GUEST REVIEWS: JOHN KELLEY

We had our doubts when John Kelley’s debut album, *A Night In The Park*, fell out of its bubble pack and onto our desk. Out of the ether of our brains, we conjured a hazy memory of wandering around a dusty desert four hours outside of L.A. high on Ecstasy with trippy, trancey breaks endlessly looping in our ears as hippies danced facing the full moon. Well, Kelley has since moved on from “funky desert breaks” of the Überzone and Crystal Method school. Released August 23, *A Night In The Park* showcases deft techno breaks that can hang tough alongside the likes of any UK nu-skool names, and it’s released on Ball of Waxx, the label Kelley co-owns with fellow LA lifers David DeLaski, Brian Saitzyk, and Moontribe’s Brian Seed. With whispers of a West Coast breaks revival dancing on DJ tongues, we asked humble Mr. Kelley what he’s playing this month. *Star Eyes*
www.djohnkelley.com, www.ballofwaxx.com

KOMA & BONES AMPLIFY Burrito/UK/12

Koma & Bones bring their hardfunk sensibilities and rock the floor with the guitar-flavored anthem “Amplify.” “Amplify” features a slammin’ riff and a serious feedback build that will have everyone jumping on the dancefloor. Sound cheesy? It’s not. K & B pull it off with style. *JK*

JDS JUMP AROUND TCR/UK/12

I love these guys and this record kicks serious ass. JDS doesn’t f - - k around and they don’t make any apologies for their brand of hard, grinding, in-your-face acid-flavored breaks. If your crowd likes real beats and real music, your dancefloor will be instantly filled when you drop this one. *JK*

EVIL NINE PEARLSHOT Marine Parade/UK/12

Evil Nine and Marine Parade deliver again—here’s a slammin’ hip-hop-flavored break with a grinding bassline and hooky raps. Still uptempo enough to toss into most crates, Marine Parade continues to push the envelope and break out of the box with this genre-crossing thumper. Put this in your case now. *JK*

SPANK ROCK

PUT THAT PUSSY ON ME

PUT THAT PUSSY ON ME REMIX

Money Studies/US/12

A northern cousin to its booty bengin’ relative Miami bass, Baltimore breaks are a ghetto fabulous blend of deep rumbling bass and ridiculous vaginal linguistics. With remix work from Low Budget, Diplo, and Blu Jemz, there are several DJ options on these two releases, ranging from an acapella to a down right dirty bass funk mix. Enjoy the high-resolution ass pic on the sleeve, but what’s up with the zitty fanny? *Praxis*

DJ WOOD

BUN DEM

Twenty Hz/CAN/12

Loooooong decay echoes are the order of the day as Wood’s Baby Cham-style vocal hook digs into a thick and nasty bass throb on this double kick-lead track. “Bun Dem” fits easily in dubstep or nu-skool breaks sets, and the Karma Remix might even impress the folks on the main dancefloor with its tougher, more ravey beats. *Derek Gray*

D DOUBLE & CHRONIK AND DOUBLE &

SHORTY S

YOUNGER SLEW DEM

Slew Dem/UK/12

Alright MCs, step up and get ready to war. Slew Dem have brought out their automatics and AKs—both rapid-fire lyrics and riddims punctuated with gunfire sounds. As far as flow is concerned, these four MCs define the grime genre with lyrics that roll, repeat and

reload. Closest thing we’ve heard to authentic crimeys busting out since MC Shan defended the Bridge back in ‘86. *DJ Chopper*

QUESTIONMARKS

SWINGBEAT

More 2 Da Floor/UK/12

If y’all thought that Kompkt *shaffel* shit swung hard, get on this see-saw bass ride. Shifting back and forth between 4/4 kicks and waltzing triplets, Questionmarks logs dancefloor mayhem that encompasses DJ Hype-type breaks, Jon E Cash-style dank sublow bottom end and the aforementioned swinging speed garage sound. And if ya ask me, that’s the type of quality and variety you deserve for your £5.95 (US\$10.99) plus tax! *DJ Chopper*

CIRCUIT BREAKER FEAT. DADDY FREDDY

LEGALIZE!

Dangerous Drums/GER/12

If you liked rude *bwoy* Freddy’s *rougher dan dem* wild-style ragga lyrics on his outings with noise master The Bug, Circuit Breaker delivers similar breakbeat mortar shells. I don’t think I’ve heard as militant a weed song either—“Legalize” pogos along with distorted bass sweeps, big-ass breaks, and subtle minor-key reggae stabs. The results are as tough as those heavily-armed Mendocino cannabis cultivators frightening away Babylon DEA! *Tomas Palermo*



FUTURE JAZZ GUEST REVIEWS: BOOZOO BAJOU

Longtime Stereo Deluxe stalwarts Boozoo Bajou are often seen as a next-century dub act, but their original influence was the dirty South—not Lil’ Jon and Trillville, but deep, nasty blues from the heart of the bayou. Since they’re from Nuremberg, Germany, bandmates Peter Heider and Florian Seyberth didn’t exactly know how to spell “bayou”—it came out “bajou” instead. No matter. They redeem themselves on *Dust My Broom*, released this month on !K7. The album’s title is a tribute to bluesman Robert Johnson, and its contents skip all over the soulful map, featuring lonesome vocals from country legend Tony Joe White, reggae MC turns from Top Cat and U-Brown, and soulful crooning from Ben Weaver and Willie Hutch. It’s a top-notch take on American roots music from a surprising source; nonetheless, we wondered what new jams the Boozoos are feeling. Find out below. *Mike Mack* www.k7.com

NIROBI AND BARAKAS BUNGEE JUMP AGAINST RACISM Tru Thoughts/UK/12
Tru Thoughts label co-owner Robert Luis (Nirobi) hooks up with Ninja Tune artist Bonobo (Barakas) to supply a great Eastern-style broken beat number complete with Bollywood vocals and Indian percussion. “Partridge” is 100-ish bpm breakbeats that drop into a Danny Breaks-style warped d&b bassline and a dubbed out take on the A-side’s vocal sample. *BB*

ASTON “FAMILY MAN” BARRETT SOUL CONSTITUTION PK/UK/12
This is a series of deep reggae instrumentals put out by London’s PK label and Tokyo’s Dubstore record shop. Aston “Family Man” Barrett’s “Soul Constitution” is a Meters/JBs tribute, while Ansell Collins’ moody “Portobello” sets Augustus Pablo’s melodica against ’70s blaxploitation guitar. Finally, Lynn Taitt’s previously unreleased “Williamsburg” is a tightly wound track full of flute and fatback guitars. *BB*

LEKAN BABALOLA OBA AWON OBA (KING OF KINGS) Lex 51/UK/12
After the IG Culture remix of “Asokere” blew up big time across the broken beat scene, Lekan Babalola returns to the Lex 51 label with Afronaut and Misa Negra on the beats. A killer broken groove, this 12” comes complete with vocal and dub mixes plus acapella and beats edits. An outstanding release! *BB*

**NERY BAUER
MAHARAJA**
Fluid Ounce/UK/12
Bauer’s sophomore EP shifts closer to his rock/metal leanings. “Maharaja” dispenses rapid-fire drumbeats, twangy guitar licks and bangin’ congas. “Transformin’” is the closest “rock” track on the EP. Whether or not this one catches on remains to be seen, but Fluid Ounce still has enough balls to step outside its safety net. *Velanche*

**MARK DE CLIVE-LOWE FEAT. LADY ALMA
KEEP IT MOVING**
Funk of Fury/SWE/12
With two previous singles by Bugz in the Attic’s Alex Phountzi and Sciclone, Sweden’s Funk of Fury is off to a brisk start for such a young label. Philly’s soul queen Lady Alma shines on “Keep It Moving” with resplendently layered vocals over some typically rough and jumpy De Clive-Lowe beats tempered by the New Zealander’s trademark placid Rhodes chords. *Tomas Palermo*

**YE: SOLAR
THE REMIXES**
Vinyl Vibes/GER/12
On Vinyl Vibes’ website, tastemaker DJ/producer Rainer Trüby praises Ye:Solar’s own Tanzflächen Remix on this EP. Justifiably so, as it melds broken house rhythms with flip-flopping basslines and sparse analog beats—a vibe that conjures drunken Saturday nights that blur hazily into Sunday mornings. Eva Be’s Egme Remix is head-turning bizarre reggae-cum-hip-house, while Inverse Cinematics’s Abi 05 Remix is rock solid broken business with heavy percussion. Sorry Rainer—it’s my pick of the lot! *Derek Grey*

**DAVID BORSU
REMINISCENT EP**
Counterpoint/UK/12
Belgian multi-instrumentalist and programmer Borsu (whose debut CD drops in September) knows the art of song arrangement. This EP practically charts jazz music’s progression from sultry ’60s-style modal (“Late Night Swing”) to swingin’ early ’70s jazz-funk on “Reminiscent” (think Funk Inc or Blackbirds) through modern acid jazz/broken fusions (“East Beaumont”) and even some Afro-Latin jazz-house (“Coltrance”). This will stay put in DJ crates for decades to come. *Hector Cedillo*

**JUJU ORCHESTRA
FUNKY NASSAU**
Audiopharm/GER/12
Germany’s DJ Sammy and instrumentalist Oliver Belz are busy making jazz cool. “Kind of Latin Rhythms” steepens in a ’60s bossa vibe while staying mellow and true. The title track, a cover of the ’70s original, steals it with killer keys, swinging horns, and a heavy dose of funk. The past is here today, but you may be strutting tomorrow. *Velanche*

**PAROV STELAR
A NIGHT IN TORINO EP**
Etagé Noir/AUS/12
Released on his own label, Linz, Austria’s Stelar drops a lively EP that’s strongly influenced by swing jazz, funky house and his own unique sound. That sound—like his previous output on Auris and STIR-15—is attuned to the night, with velvety and ethereal textures enveloping sturdy house rhythms. Both the suspenseful “Rude Boys” and the upbeat “A Night In Torino” put jazzy horn samples in the Cuisinart and blend thoroughly with hefty house-not-house beats. If Mr. Scruff’s “Get A Move On” was your jam, this EP might be too. *Tomas Palermo*

CHICAGO SUR SEINE
Versatile/FRA/12
I:Cube is a chameleon from Paris who merges modern electronics with retro dance, and blurs the boundaries between house, techno, ’80s music and broken beat. That eclecticism is on display on here, illustrated by an analog synth-saturated ode to early Chicago house. With its churning retro keys and flying hi-hats, “Sur Seine” could snare errant Goths or haute fashionistas alike. “Tokyo Uno” indulges in languid *Miami Vice*-era dance hues, while appropriately employing Yellow Magic Orchestra melodies. *Roar Shack*

**MARCOS VALLE
BESTEIRAS DE AMOR**
Far Out/UK/12
Hold on a sec—let Jazzanova’s mix sink in. What begins like an early Murk Records production (a lone kick drum and minimal bassline pulse) develops over the course of nine minutes into a thrilling tour de force, riding on looped vocal samples of Brazilian singer Valle and Jazzanova’s colorful palette of stabbing keyboards and Afro-Latin percussion made dramatic via chord shifts and breathtaking drops. The Berlin collective again show us their best. *Tomas Palermo*

**JAYMZ NYLON
WANTCHA**
HOW DEEP IS THE WORLD
Nylon/US/12
Lovely remixes from New Yorker Nylon’s *African Audio Research Program* album from earlier this year. “Dance Of The Orixas (Dub)” and “Wantcha,” featuring Bobbi Sanders, dance the tightrope between deep house and Afro-Latin broken sounds. Another single finds Champion Soul’s tough scattered snares remix of “How Deep Is Deep” recalling Seiji or Daz-I-Cue’s gritty rub-a-dub breaks. A pair of aces if you ask me. *Derek Grey*

I:CUBE



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Jazzanova Blue Note Trip: Lookin’ Back/Movin’ On

Digging in the crates of the Blue Note vaults, world-renowned DJ collective, JAZZANOVA, has compiled and mixed the new *Blue Note Trip: Lookin’ Back/Movin’ On*. Pulling vintage material from Horace Silver, Bobby Hutcherson, Eddie Gale, Donald Byrd, and Bobbi Humphrey to name a few, Jazzanova has created energetic moments with melodies and arrangements that will set the perfect backdrop for your summer shindig! This limited edition 2-disc set and the specially packaged full-length vinyl are both in stores now.

Erik Truffaz Saloua

“French trumpeter Erik Truffaz plays with such pristine minimalism — in long silvery peals and soft metallic breaths — that he sounds more like an atmosphere than a soloist.” — *Rolling Stone*

One of the leading trumpeters on the cutting edge of jazz today, **Erik Truffaz** continues to stake out provocative new territory on *Saloua*, his fifth U.S. release on Blue Note Records. While still waving the flag for electric Miles Davis (most prominent on “Tantrik” and “Spirale”), Truffaz also investigates the easy bond between jazz and world music on several powerfully atmospheric pieces like “Yabou,” “Gedech,” “Ines,” and the stirring title track, all featuring the passionate vocals of Tunisian singer Mounir Troudi.

The Mizell Brothers Mizell

The Mizell Brothers have been beloved by generations of DJs and jazz-funk lovers from Larry Levan to modern-day producers like Madlib, Spinna, J Dilla, the Neptunes, and the list goes on. This definitive Mizell Brothers retrospective features their greatest works plus three previously unreleased tracks.

David Axelrod The Edge: David Axelrod at Capitol Records 1966–1970

David Axelrod’s music has been widely viewed as planting the seeds for hip-hop music today and has influenced and been sampled by everyone from DJ Shadow to Dr. Dre to De La Soul, and countless others. This is the first official anthology of the legendary Los Angeles producer-composer-arranger’s late-’60s work at Capitol Records.

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HIP-HOP GUEST REVIEWS: GE-OLGY

People are fond of separating hip-hop into mainstream and indie, but NY's Ge-ology is one who proves that the supposedly wide chasm between the two ain't nothing but a pinstripe. The dude has produced beats for Tupac Shakur and De La Soul, plus flipped it for Mos Def and Bahamadia. He's got the classic hip-hop sound of a Pete Rock or Premier, but can also flip the script when need be. And when he's not making buttery smooth beats—the kind that can be heard on this summer's 30-song compilation *Ge-ology Plays Ge-ology* (Female Fun)—or hunting for rare records, this beatsmith is also damn handy with a pen and paint can, having designed covers for Rawkus records and toured with The Barnstormers. Clearly, this quiet storm knows how to use his time, and we took a precious 10 minutes of it to have him write these hip-hop reviews. *Tyra Bangs* www.femalefunmusic.com

MARVIN GAYE I WANT YOU (BLING47 RE-EDIT) Bling 47/US/CD-R
Wow, all I can say is...Marvin would have been proud. Beyond incredible! It's almost sacrilegious to touch such a timeless masterpiece but you can tell every new element was done with such care and works so well. It's definitely Marvin with that Detroit bump. Funky! *Ge-ology*

STEVE SPACEK DOLLAR (J-DILLA MIX) Sound In Color/US/CD-R
Steve Spacek's innovative vocals over a Dilla beat are guaranteed fire. Imagine taking the original Philly sound on a trip to Detroit, then escaping to London but decide to let the track marinate in the heat of the Los Angeles sun. I'm talking Billy Paul on steroids. Gritty soul, classic heat! *Ge-ology*

PLATINUM PIED PIPERS SHOTGUN Ubiquity/US/12
I've been bumpin' this since it was known as the "Beat Down Intro" on Waajeed's Bling47 "BPM" instrumentals EP. With J-Dilla on vocals, it was later reintroduced as the "Shotgun Intro" on PPP's debut album. And now—completely over the top—comes the addition of Medaphoar and Invincible verses. Bananas! *Ge-ology*

G.U.N. (GREED'S ULTIMATE NEMESIS) THE GREEDY EP

World of Beats/US/12
With so much hip-hop fast food around, it's nice to find something that's been carefully simmered all day. G.U.N.'s five-song EP will still be bursting with flavor long after your typical single has passed its expiration date. Beats by the legendary Soulman and rhymes that are unflashy but devastatingly effective and poignant make this release more than worthwhile. *Pete Babb*

SEAN PRICE ONION HEAD BUCKSHOT AIN'T NO COMPARISON

Duck Down/US/12
Produced by 9th Wonder, both these singles are soaked in soul samples twisted in all kinds of blunted forms. "Onion Head" is a "step back before I slap ya" admonition from Price, whose battle lyrics prove he's still walking the hard concrete and spitting bitter rhymes like the best. Likewise, Buckshot's half-whispered, glass-throat lyrics are packed with warnings and swagger: "I'm Mike Tyson in his prime/I'm the man with the master mind..." The gusto of these two Boot Camp Click warriors proves real hip-hop is here to stay. *Phil Phloe*

SBX ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK Soundtable/US/12
AG, Party Arty, D-Flow, GD, and a Lord Finesse versus Percee P joint all produced by Paul Nice: its hip-hop royalty representing the Bronx, carrying on the borough's storied tradition. Although the tracks



DRUM & BASS GUEST REVIEWS: DJ CLEVER

Walk into the futuristic fluorescence of Lower East Side drum & bass shop Breakbeat Science and you'll likely encounter the chiseled face of Brett Cleaver, better known as DJ Clever. Since June 2000, Cleaver has run the store's day-to-day operations with a sharp eye, while moonlighting as one of New York City's most adventurous drum & bass DJs. You can hear his envelope-pushing sound on his fourth official mix CD, *Breakbeat Science Exercise 05*, where he busts down barriers by mixing in the likes of Pieter K, Seba, Amit, and Cujo. When he's not rattling speakers from Seattle to Reykjavik, Cleaver's keeping an ear to the ground for the unsung heroes of d&b—his lauded Offshore label releases intricate breakbeat surgery by the likes of Deep Blue, Paradox, and Tundra (his project with Morgan Packard). We tracked Cleaver down the Orchard Street and asked him what's blowing his mind. *Star Eyes* www.djclever.com, www.offshore-recordings.com

DEEP BLUE CALIFORNIA Scale/UK/12
The first single in support of Deep Blue's new *Metropolitan Chic* LP features two gems. "California" boasts diva vocal snippets, warm, bubbling synths, and a diving bassline. Seba's rework of "Destroyer" keeps the original congo line, yet darkens up the track. *DJ Clever*

MARTYN NXT 2 U Play:Musik/UK/12
DJ Pan (a.k.a. Martyn) has everyone talking, and this 12" on Flight's new label signifies why. The title track, reminiscent of Jonny L, brings future funk—it's as bouncy as it is quirky. The flip, "Deepwood," rolls much deeper with an underwater feeling. *DJ Clever*

MASON & D-STAR ZEROSUM BREAKOUT (KLUTE RMX) Gasm/US/12
The Philly boys get UK rebel Klute to remix the flip to their classic "Freak" 12-inch. He completely destroys it, adding his signature growling bassline and twisting up the drums and vocal samples perfectly. "Roots" is a drum workout that keeps in line with recent output. *DJ Clever*

SEBA & PARADOX FROST

Bassbin/UK/12
Two heavy bassbin rattlers from the combined minds of Sebadox. "Frost" freaks out over a foundation of punchy amens and metallic clatter, while weaving in ample amounts of deep and deadly sub bass. "Sound on Sound" plays on stop-start drum chops, switching breaks every few bars while fluttering samples and extended bass dives help maintain a relentless groove. *Ryan Romana*

DAVIDE CARBONE & KUBIKS SIX HILLS

Intrinsic/UK/12
Atmo-headz got two more reasons to smile; not only for the pairing of these two liquid funk dons, but for the two equally tight tracks they dispense. Where "Six Hills" builds from a passionate and darkly melodic full-drum intro into a dramatic 32-bar breakdown, "Ready With This" harkens back to Peshay and A-Sides' early jams. Brimming with tuneful optimism and female vocal snippets, this one keeps rolling like a Ferrari gunning the gas pedal. *DJ Chopper*

DKAY & KASRA BABYLON

Brigand/UK/12
"Babylon" is a *big* tune. Lets just get that out of the way before explaining that, despite the title, Dkay & Kasra's track is more in the style of Addiction or Fellowship than Congo Natty. Imagine triumphant horn samples, sweet chord progressions, and an echoed vocal clip that gives the tune a dubwise edge—all that before a surging bass wave comes crashing in. Flip for the tight and tidy drums of "Black Magic." Perfection. *Tomas Palermo*

TC FEAT HANNAH NEW YEAR

Valve/UK/12
XRS ERASERHEAD Wildstyle/UK/12
While the A-side track by TC & MC Jakes walks familiar Valve territory (massive bass, alternating over-driven drum patterns), the B-side is straight anthem material. Velvety R&B singer Hannah is the star of this track—her vocals get full play on a Marky-style Spanish guitar-touched harmonious roller. Likewise XRS's "Eraserhead" is a superb B-side that'll have heads thinking of GLR's Makoto, Big Bud, or Future Engineers—pure soothing bliss! *Devon Pierce*

LIONDUB/JACKY MURDA FEATURING BASS NACHO KINGSTON 11

Dubwise/US/12
Rudeboy selectas go straight to jungleX.ca distro to order this killer roots reggae/d&b burner. Imagine Black Roots Players with Dillinger on the mic—inna Brixton! Also check L-dub's other big release right now, "New York Runs Red" (Liondub Records), featuring chart-topping Jamaican roots crooner Richie Spice. *Devon Pierce*

MATHEMATICS & TACTILE REMEMBER

Social Studies/US/12
It's another great pairing—Mathematics with the Hungarian collective Tactile. "Remember" flows through wistful atmospheric before dropping in with sharp and distorted bass and a touch of techy overtones. The flip, "Dead End," tiptoes through spooky samples until the momentum of the plush rolling bass pushes you along. *Ryan Romana*

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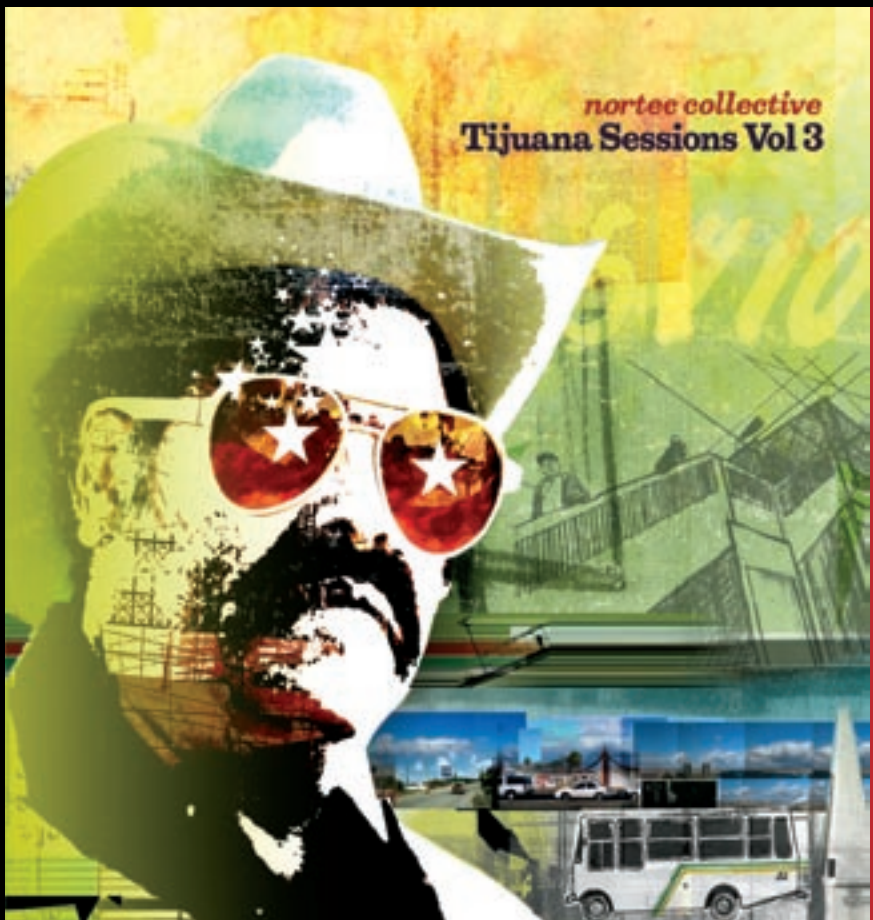
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In a magnificent follow-up to his performances in *The Life Aquatic*, Seu Jorge delivers one of the most anticipated releases of the year. 'Cru' is a marvel. Sophisticated and surprising. Intimate and raw. Seu's voice, guitar, the Brazilian 'cuica' drum along with a superb rhythm section tell the many stories: ironic, witty, but always heartfelt. Intoxicating - *Q Magazine*
As effortless as it is intense - **Straight No Chaser**
The songs are simple and emotional while intensity comes from Jorge's extraordinarily rich and versatile voice - *Esquire*

The US edition features 2 exclusive remixes of the classic tracks: **Tive Razao and Mania de Peitao.**

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REGGAE REWIND BY ROSS HOGG

THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON DANCEHALL, DUB, ROOTS, AND LOVERS ROCK.

Following in the wake of **Damien Marley's** juggernaut "Welcome to Jamrock," other Caribbean artists have begun to *bruk out* and break through to mainstream radio. **Rhianna** is enjoying success with the crossover-friendly "Pon Di Replay" (Def Jam), a track vaguely reminiscent of **Diwali**. But Def Jam isn't the only US label tapping the West Indian talent pool; **Foxy Brown's** leadoff single "Come Fly With Me" (Roc A Fella) features none other than **Sizzla** on the chorus. (Contrary to rumors, Sizzla has not signed with the Roc...at least not yet.) Sean Paul is proving other rumors to be true: he's unleashing his new culture style on the **Seasons** riddim, the follow-up to Don Corleone's massive **Drop Leaf**. Paul's "Never Gonna Be The Same" is an emotional ode to his fallen *brodren* **Daddigon**. Seasons also features soon-to-be-huge tunes from **T.O.K** ("Tears"), **Jah Cure** ("Love Is"), and **Morgan Heritage** ("Tell Me How Come").

Smile, one of the year's most *upful* riddims, is graced by a standout combination tune from **Buju Banton** and **Sizzla**; "All Shall Be Well" is currently enjoying huge success *a yard*. But the most surprising new combination is **Buju Banton** and **Peter Tosh** on the **Beaten** riddim (Rocky Gibbs), the stellar update to Tosh's 1968 anthem "Them Hafe Get A Beaten." Tosh is resurrected on "Must Get A Beaten," where his original vocals fit perfectly alongside Buju's.

Stone Love joins in on the *re-Jick* fun with their update of the timeless **Real Rock** riddim, where **Nitty Kutchie** executes an impeccable cover of **Mario's** "Let Me Love You" and **Elephant**

Man bigs up Bible study on "One Chapter A Day." The **Hard Drugs** riddim (Delperies) is an eponymous update of **Gregory Isaacs'** 1988 hit and features the long-awaited vinyl release of **Anthony Cruz** and **Buju Banton's** "Place Too Bloody."

Some old versions resurface with only the names changed: **Dutty Rub** (Down Sound) is actually **Golden Hen** (with **Fantan Mojah's** "Corruption" getting a lot of *forwards*) and the riddim that's been called everything from **Hypocrites** to **Heavenless** to **Entertainment** is back, this time around as **Water Bed** (Fire House Crew).

On the modern dub front, **Jack Dangers meets dubLoner** offers "Hiss and Buzz" (Skor), a beautifully understated EP that successfully bridges the gap between classic dub and modern electronica with sonic glimpses of Dangers' **Meat Beat Manifesto** past, while **Eyesight Project** links with vocalist **Jah Faith** on their self-titled EP (Modus Vivendi) for a more international take on ragga-tinged modern steppers.

There's plenty of new *bashment* riddims *out a road*, too. On the **Move** riddim (Fresh Ear), **Baby Cham** is back in a big way with "The Visit" and **Voicemail's** "Get Crazy" on the **El Toro** riddim (13th Tribe) is sure to bust big. **Signal** (So Solid) also hits hard with tunes from **Bounty Killer** and **Buju Banton**, but one of my favorites has to be **Cobra's** "Ediot War" on the **Red Rat**-produced **Raid** riddim (Rat-A-Kastle) where the battle veteran takes **Spragga Benz** and **Vybz Kartel** to task.



Foxy Brown



Nitty Kutchie



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POP ON TRIAL BY SARA SHERR & MARIA SCIARRINO

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Somebody must have laced the water supply with the same drugs used in *Batman Begins*, because there is no other way to explain the loopy antics that have been occurring all summer. **M.I.A.** breaking up with **Diplo** on the final night of her tour in Philly. That whole **Nike/Minor Threat** tour poster thing. **Live 8**. I could go on, but this ain't a high school yearbook. All I know is this: when I need things to feel normal, I hole up with some records and, for the most part, Philly acts are making me smile.

Even though the driving force behind **Yah Mos Def's** music is nonstop in-jokes about Philly punk history, the group manages to keep things interesting on their self-titled debut EP with awesome beats unexpectedly crafted from screamo records. The result is a loose, fun vibe where hip-hop and D.I.Y. music and culture exist in the same breath, just like *Check Your Head*-era **Beastie Boys**.

When you're finished overdosing on Y.M.D.'s circa-1994 party train anthems, **Plastic Little's** "Thug Paradise" EP is the perfect antidote. "I'm Not A Thug," as far as I know, contains the only hip-hop skit that references Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* cycle. When not skewering the audiences they're designed to attract (**Fischerspooner** fans, Brooklynites, indie rockers, Philly's singles scene, graff thugs, parents, you) or trying to make us dance with their glitchy beats, Plastic Little has a thing or two to say without having to be all soapboxy.

Another local group making my eardrums buzz is **Hail Social**. They have an album coming out soon on **Polyvinyl Records** but their new 7" will hold you over in the meantime. With incisor-sharp guitars, start-stop rhythms, and introspective lyrics the group sounds like an updated

Versus crossed with **Wire**—they're reminiscent of indie rock's early days, when dressing to impress wasn't a required part of the success equation. Likewise, Montreal quartet **Kiss Me Deadly's** "Cosmic Lovers" EP adds breathy **Blonde Redhead** theatrics into the mix, among other things.

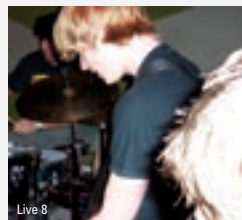
Lilys mastermind **Kurt Heasley** shows up on **Nobody's** new 7", available from Mush Records. The two collaborate on **The Kinks'** classic track "Fancy." Heasley's known for relentlessly seeking the holy grail of the Davies brothers; it's interesting to hear his Anglophile vocals over this spacy, Eastern-tinged track.

The **Fellini/As Mercenarias 7"** reissue on Soul Jazz might be the best thing to come out of South America since **Os Mutantes**. Both bands were part of Brazil's post-punk scene in the 1980s. Mercenarias steals the show here, combining the best parts of the Rough Trade compilation *Wanna Buy A Bridge?* in under three minutes.

Also worth checking out is !!!'s new single. Side A is rendition of **Magnetic Fields'** "Take Ecstasy With Me;" the track is already twee (having been penned by **Stephin Merrit**), and the group applies another layer of gay disco gloss. Luckily, the cover of **Nate Dogg's** "Get Up" saves this from the cutout bin purgatory. Starting as a smooth, R&B-inflected tune, it culminates in a hysterical frenzy of layered feedback and screaming. Kind of unexpected, just like this summer.



Kurt Heasley



Live 8



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LUCKY 13
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Man, I'm festering. I'm careening through life like a drunken mammoth. I live in an oversized record crate, peppered with sporadic piles of books, cases of spray paint, and random bicycle parts. I lose headphones and sweatshirts and entire nights like it's going out of style. I need to get myself a car and hit the damn road. Go explore the backroads and sleep in the woods and only eat in mom and pop diners and go to minor league baseball games. I need to give my liver a little break. And eat more avocados. Basically, I'm a lanky nudist wino in search of a trashy disco/punk rock girl to share the mess of my life with.

This could easily be a suicide note, or a singles ad. Is there really that much of a difference?

1. A.G. "TAKE A RIDE (FEAT. PARTY ARTY AND ALOE BLACC)" (Look/US/12) The new A.G. full length is gonna hit *hard* this fall. In fact, get ready to be run the fuck over by everything DJ Design and the Look Records stable have up their sleeves, including Grip Grand's "But Anyways." Buy stock now.

2. LYNN NESS "AIN'T 2 MUCH" (New Medina/US/12EP) Upstart Bay Area producer drops a gem of a debut with guest vocals from Yesh, L-Roneous, and Sach from The Nonce. Warm, jazzy samples drip with soul and handclaps and make your head nod like you've known the tracks for years. Lovely.

3. HYDROPONIC SOUND SYSTEM "CHOICE CUTS VOL.1" (Swedish Brandy/SWE/12EP) Texas duo Skinny Fresh and Rube are back on the map with frequent collaborators Bavu Blakes and Headkrack rocking the mic as the fellas work out their jazzed-up grooves. "Ray's Bodega" is the joint!

4. KIM HILL "RIGHT NOW (PRESTO REMIX)" (Concrete Grooves/US/12) A bold, sensuous voice over a buttery beat is a thing of beauty to behold. Originally with the Black Eyed Peas, Kim's third solo LP, *Pharaoh's Daughter*, will feature production from 4Hero and Bugz In The Attic.

5. SONICBLOOM FROM THE GET GO (CFO/US/CD) These young cats bring a much-needed excitement back to the San Francisco live jazz/hip-hop sound. Here are 18 songs that you can listen to and enjoy! That's pretty impressive right there.

6. RUN_RETURN "ANIMALS ARE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE" (n5MD/US/7) I'm not really a music journalist. My true calling is making up genres to write on the plastic cards at SF's Open Mind Music record store. I've already got "Haircut 2000" for all the new electro-punk records, and Run_Return inspired the first occupant of the "Warm Fuzzy" section! Lazy, happy music for hallucinatory afternoons and foggy 4 a.m.s.

7. DOOLEY-O "SOAPS" (Lewis/UK/12) Producer/DJ/MC Dooley-O shows his prowess at all the above as he takes on lazy girlfriends and wack rappers with a trio of cuts from his upcoming full-length, *I Gotcha*. Production could almost be Bomb Squad, flows could almost be Schooly-D. Illmatic all the way!

8. THE D-BOYZ STREET SAMPLER (demo/US/CD) Right now SF is full of young badasses who simply refuse to spin straight songs. Every track is an acapella over a different instrumental. Cats like Vin Sol and DJ Mutt are showing the world what lazy fucks us old-timers are. Well now the little overachievers are producing their own beats too. Great.

9. MR. BEASLEY "NEON" (Larkin Out/UK/12) Big, clanky beats with a Lush-like vocal and a *fat* break about halfway through. Too slow for the "Haircut 2000" section, this one would have to go in the "JunkRock" slot. And check the fuzzy hip-hop breaks of "Last Night" on the flipside.

10. V/A "URBANIZE VOL.1" (Urbanize/UK/12EP) A worthy platter of progressive British hip-hop. "Unsettled" by Motley is the jam with its pulsing keys and driving bassline, but also check Subcinct's double-time R&B on "Hit The Ground Running."

11. SOME WATER AND SUN "SNOWBREAKER" (Hefty/US/12) Quirky and loveable like some weird Japanese toy, "Snowbreaker"'s beats pop and bounce all over the place but somehow everything fits together just right. Might be what Mr. Scruff sounds like on acid.

12. VOICE "MEDIocre" (Public Transit/CAN/12EP) In the fine tradition of Bahamadia and Medusa, New Orleans' Voice comes strong and clear over a jazzy mid-tempo beat by Moonstarr on this Toronto label. Perfect for summer barbecue jams and sunset parties.

LUCKY 13 JOHN ALBERT WRECKING CREW (Scribner/US/book) There are few things this writer enjoys more than sex, drugs, punk rock, and baseball, and Christian Death's John Albert has brought them all together in this memoir novel culled from his award-winning column in the *LA Weekly*. Think *Bad News Bears* meets *The Germs*. Fuck yeah!

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at www.fabric8.com/redwine. Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



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IN THE STUDIO KUTMASTA KURT

THIS PRODUCER, LABEL CHIEF, AND DJ HANGS WITH KOOL KEITH AND MAKES BEATS IN HIS BOXERS. WORDS: JESSE TERRY PHOTO: THEO JEMISON

Kurt Matlin, a.k.a. KutMasta Kurt, has been spinning and conjuring ill tracks since the late '80s when he was a Cali radio DJ at Stanford's KZSU. His year has been busy with beats for *Redneck Olympics* (the US release is titled *Redneck Games* due to legal hassles), his collaboration with Koal Keith on *Diesel Truckers*, and Motion Man's upcoming *Pablito's Way*. We checked in to see how he manages a triple life running Threshold Records, producing tracks, and touring as a DJ.

WHAT'S THE MOST UNDERRATED ASPECT OF HIP-HOP PRODUCTION?

Having a DJ background. A lot of people make beats but don't have a rep as a DJ and don't know how to rock a crowd. Understanding a crowd gives you a better understanding of how to approach music. If you want to rock a party or play at a club, you got to format your record a certain way. You got to make sure you got the right tempos, intros, outros, and stuff like that. Aesthetically, when you hear a record produced by a DJ there's just a certain feel to it.

YOU'RE USING THE SERATO SCRATCH (MP3 DJ SYSTEM) TO DJ THESE DAYS?

I've been using that with CDJs. I started using CDJs in 2001 for the Cali Comm tour. I was going to buy a new pair of Vestax, just to have some dependable turntables, and I went in the store and saw the CDJ 2000s. I was like, "Fuck, no more carrying around records." For the show, you don't have to be digging around all the individual parts of the records and you can custom burn CDs of just the tracks you need. Then I saw Serato, and I played with that and it felt right to me.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST DECIDE TO MAKE BEATS?

I think back in '86. I found an ultimate breaks and beats record that everyone was sampling from and I was like "Oh shit! This is where everyone is getting their stuff from." I started digging for the records that were originally on there, and tried to tinker around making my own shit. I started with a little DOD guitar sampler with like two seconds on it. I'd flip a beat like 'doo-doo kack, doo-doo kack,' and put

that on the sampler and I'd take a cassette player, put that through my mixer, reloop, and it would get hissier and dirtier. In the early '90s I started doing remixes. It took me awhile to figure out what to do.

These days I'm still using the Ensoniq [ASR-10] and the [Akai] MPC 2000XL. If I had more patience for programs, I could probably just do that shit in [Apple] Logic, 'cause they have a drum machine. Now your whole studio can be in your laptop, depending on how much processing power you have. It's good in a way because it makes stuff easy and portable, but sometimes it's nice to have an actual machine. I think technology is more beneficial than not—it makes stuff easier, quicker, and cheaper. Right now, I'm mixing, recording, and adding little sounds from Reason or Logic myself.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON RIGHT NOW?

I'm working on Motion Man's new album; other than that I got to make some new tracks.

DOES RUNNING A LABEL HINDER YOUR MUSICAL OUTPUT?

It definitely gives me less time. There's only so many hours in the day, so you've got to make what you do count. If I'm finishing up an album, I might be in the studio six to ten hours a day for a week; other times I might not touch anything for a week.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR STUDIO MORE COMFORTABLE?

My apartment is my studio. I just make beats in my underwear. It's the way to do it, how you're comfortable. You can't really do that when people are around though.

www.kutmastakurt.com



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M-AUDIO iCONTROL HARDWARE CONTROLLER FOR GARAGEBAND

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M-Audio iControl takes the company's reliable USB controller technology (used in Trigger Finger and Ozonic controllers among others) and designs it specifically for users of Apple's powerful GarageBand software. At first I thought "kinda redundant," then I took it for a spin. Not only is the unit's design elegant and no-nonsense, its interface (transport buttons for play, stop, record, fast forward, and rewind, tracking jog wheel, master volume fader) enhances GarageBand recording sessions. Eight assignable rotary encoders can be used for effects processing. I experienced a little latency (slow response) from some of the volume knobs and the unit lacks a LED reference screen. Overall, a nice add-on for the dedicated user seeking to speed up their Gband action. *Tomas Palermo*



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JOSH EUSTIS GUEST REVIEW
GRADO DJ200 TURNTABLE CARTRIDGES

MSRP. \$110, WWW.GRADOLABS.COM

For the uninitiated (I'm just a recent convert), Grado makes turntable cartridges and headphones that rate among the finest from Mercury all the way to Pluto. I had the distinct pleasure of putting these through the "Pepsi Challenge" with lesser cartridges. Using **Grado's DJ200**, I put on "The Rain" by Missy Elliott featuring Timbaland; it played with the most rubbery, gorgeous bottom end, warm, wide mids, and a flawlessly airy top end. Lightning Bolt's *Ride The Skies* sounded as if it were recorded by Alan Moulder—simply put: Herculean sound. Autechre's *Untilted* was met with joyous shrieking. If you watch the heavy cueing, your records sound better than they ever have, or ever will. *JLE*

Josh is one half of Telefon Tel Aviv. His remix of Oliver Nelson for the Impulse! jazz label is out this fall.

One touch is all it takes...



Chris "The Greek" Panaghi DJ, Producer, Remixer

Introducing the new CFX-20 Professional Tabletop CD Player, the latest and greatest addition to Gemini's product line. With its revolutionary Touch-Sensitive Technology built right into the Jog Wheel, Gemini brings you a new level of control never before seen in its price bracket. We recently put the CFX-20 into the hands of world renowned producer Chris "The Greek" Panaghi, who has worked with such remarkable talent as Marc Anthony, Gloria Estefan, Jessica Simpson, and Michael Jackson. He had this to say about the Gemini's latest innovation: *"The CFX-20 is the perfect CD player for any professional DJ. It's truly the most powerful and flexible CD player Gemini has released yet – a must-have for all club environments."*

One touch and he could feel the difference...



Chris "The Greek" Panaghi's new Top 10 single
"Movin' On" (Peaked at #9 on Billboard's Hot Dance/Club Play Chart)

WAVES L3 ULTRA MAXIMIZER SOFTWARE

MSRP. \$600, WWW.WAVES.COM

If you're a pro, the **L3 Ultra Maximizer** can help you fine tune and sweeten the perfect mixdown; if you're an amateur, the L3 can get your tracks up to snuff for your next DJ gig or demo pressing. In layman's terms, the L3 is a compressor/limiter that listens to your music on multiple frequency bands, and individually adjusts the volume peaks and valleys over time, resulting in a sound that is rich, robust, and perceptibly (though not actually) louder. The perfect mastering plugin for all levels of producers. *Jesse Terry*





STANTON FINAL SCRATCH 2.0/NATIVE INSTRUMENTS TRAKTOR

SCRATCH AMP MSRP, \$799, WWW.STANTONDJ.COM, WWW.NATIVE-INSTRUMENTS.COM
 Growing legions of DJs are happily going to clubs armed with a laptop and an iPod, leaving their dub-plates at home to roll spliffs on. While you can't roll a spliff on an MP3, you can do just about anything you can do with a set of decks with the powerful combination of **Stanton's Final Scratch 2.0** and **Native Instruments Traktor**. ScratchAmp2 adds inputs and outputs to the hardware interface, meaning you can now record your voice/guitar/etc and immediately scratch it. The new version adds stability, and also plays AAC and WMA files in addition to MP3s. *Jesse Terry*

STANTON SCRATCH AMP (LEFT) WORKS WITH NATIVE INSTRUMENTS TRAKTOR SOFTWARE.

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RAIN LIVEBOOK LAPTOP

MSRP, \$2699.95, WWW.RAINRECORDING.COM

Gaming geeks have been coughing up serious cash for customized laptops since *DOOM* hit in '93, so let me just say off the bat that the **Rain LiveBook** features no monogrammed alien heads or awful airbrushed stencils. Instead, the LiveBook is a laptop specifically equipped for powerful mobile recording: 533MHz SDRAM for blazing fast speed and multiple plug-in use inside your favorite DAW, FireWire for connecting all the latest external hardware, a gorgeous 15" screen, and High Definition audio capable of both 5.1 and 7.1 surround to start. Add the modular external StormDrive (which can cool itself without a fan) and you got yourself a pretty damn slick and efficient all-in-one recording computer. *Ryan Sommer*



SHURE E4C SOUND ISOLATING EARPHONES

MSRP, \$299, WWW.SHURESTORE.COM

If you're looking to ditch those mediocre bundled iPod earbuds, and upgrade to something a little more sophisticated, **Shure's E4c Sound Isolating Earphones** are a top notch investment. For all those hours you spend on Napster—or ripping CDs you actually own—and enduring public transportation after a night of heavy drinking, the separation these puppies give you from the outside world will have you feeling better faster than you can say "Sapphire and tonic." The kit comes with multiple sizes to interchange, plus the precision drivers right up on your ear socket are the same caliber used by musicians everywhere. *Ryan Sommer*

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LINDSEY (Negroclash / Triple Crown) **MADLIB** (Stones Throw) **PEANUT BUTTER WOLF** (Stones Throw)

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Monday, Aug 29	LAS VEGAS	TABU	TRIPLE FIVE SOUL / BOXFRESH / SUBSCRIPT PROJECT VEGAS
Thursday, Sept 15	CHICAGO	SONOTHEQUE	UNTITLED 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Saturday, Sept 17	NYC	SOUTHPAW	ATRIUM 3:00 - 5:00 PM
Friday, Sept 23	SAN FRANCISCO	MILK BAR	TRUE 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Sunday, Sept 25	LOS ANGELES	MONTMARTRE	FRED SEGAL (SANTA MONICA) 2:00 - 4:00 PM

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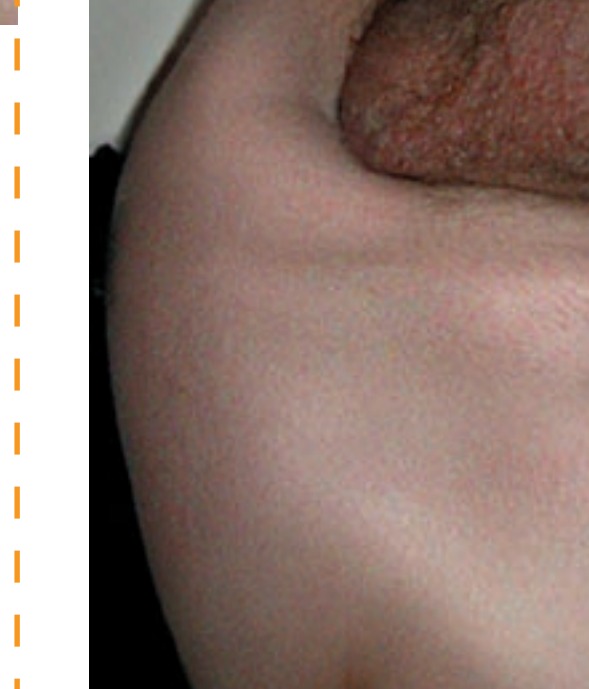
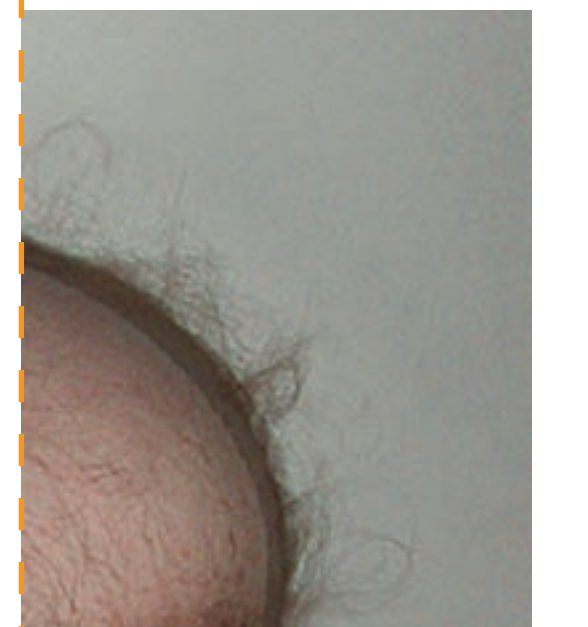
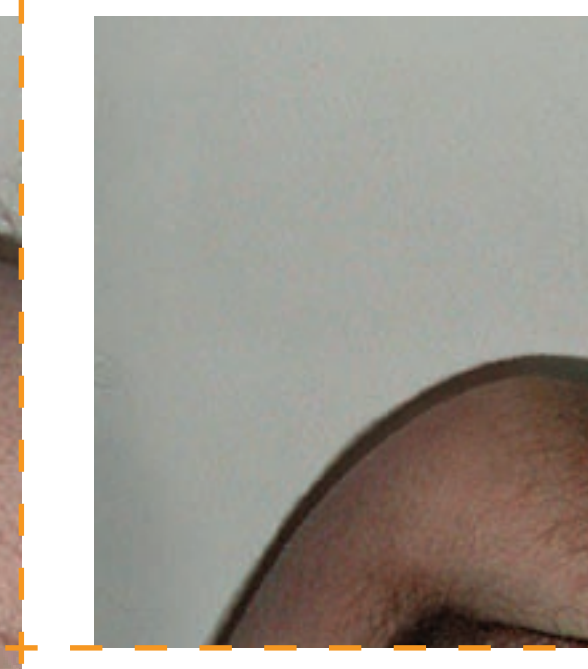
KEEP IT CURIOUS™
resfest | 2005

"Here is where sharp meets cutting edge."

Los Angeles Times

"An eye-popping showcase for artists."

The Village Voice



VIS-ED: ANDREW POMMIER

Delving inside the figurative fantasies of a shy Canadian skateboarder.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST IMAGES: ANDREW POMMIER



ABOVE:
“...and out came the sparrows”

RIGHT:
Exclusive piece for XLR8R Vis-Ed

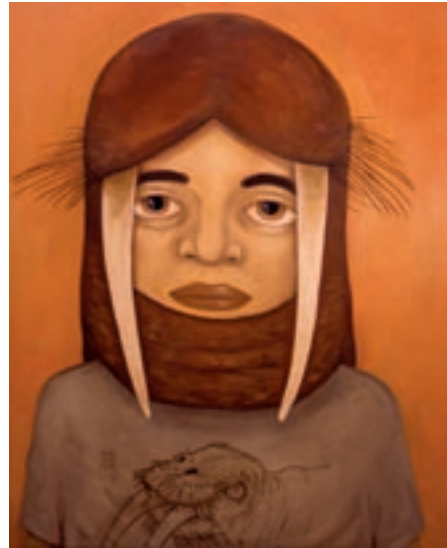
Andrew Pommier likes to draw bunnies, sparrows, and people wearing animal heads. And more often than not, they're smoking. Seems pretty weird for someone whose favorite saying is “never smoke,” but this Canadian is a study in contradictions. He and his younger brother—skate photographer Scott Pommier—were raised in the comparatively little mining town of Sudbury in Ontario, Canada but their work has been all over the world, from the pages of *Thrasher* and *Transworld* (Scott) to shows in Italy, Australia, and New York (Andrew). And though skate graphics often convey toughness through hackneyed metal clichés (skulls, hesh fonts, monsters), Pommier's art for skate companies like Toy Machine, RVCA, and Momentum is often touching, with renderings of Ed Templeton hugging an owl and Rick McCrank screaming in a squid outfit.

Many of these graphics—along with Pommier's signature, saucer-eyed indie kids—can be found in *Things I Don't Remember*, published last November by the UK's Holy Water. “The book draws from the past nine years of sketchbook drawings, paintings (both watercolor and oil), and a smattering of the commercial work I have done,” says Pommier. “I really like that I could include a lot of sketchbook stuff because I love it when I get to see how other artists get their initial ideas. Sketches pull back the curtain a little.”

Following his May show, *The Parallel Campaign*, with Derrick Hodgson at Los Angeles' Lab 101 gallery, we caught up with this soft-spoken 31-year-old back home in Vancouver. He advised us to stay humble and, of course, never smoke.

www.andrewpommier.com, www.holy-water.co.uk





Your human characters often wear animal ears, horns, or costumes. What does this symbolize for you?

I don't really think in symbolic ways. My paintings and drawings aren't created based on a grand theory or for cerebral satisfaction. The images are created for the love of humor and affection for the odd and out of place. The displacement also rings with a kind of sadness. My paintings are about playing with images and icons. The costumes and cigarettes in some cases reinforce the separation of the characters from a normal day-to-day—the outsider.

Are the people that you draw and paint people that you know?

The people that I paint are almost always faces from my head. There are maybe one or two paintings that I was thinking about a person but never trying to duplicate their features; it's more about picking up on visual clues. I just draw and the face that comes out is the face that comes out.

You've said that you're a big fan of John Currin's work. Where did you first encounter his work and what is it you like most about it?

I became aware of Currin's work when I went to the Venice Biennale in 1995 while I was going to school in Florence. It didn't really strike me at first but in later years I would trip over his work here and

there and I really liked the direction he was going. I like that he sticks close to figurative work and works within the traditions of painting; also, his work is very playful and whimsical and sometimes just plain silly. All that *and* he is pretty successful.

What does the cigarette as an object represent to you?

The cigarette adds a certain toughness to the image. Also it seems to make the characters I draw or paint to be more based in the real world, [as if] the characters are just normal people going through their day. I also like the cigarette because it is one way to spoil the cuteness factor. I have always liked using symbols and this one symbol has been with me for a while. It seems to really connect to people. It is a commonality.

Who was your favorite skater growing up?

Mike Vallely. At the time he was one of the best street skaters and he rode for Powell-Peralta—everybody's favorite company in the '80s. As he states proudly these days, he was one of the first pros to break away from the major companies and ride for World Industries, a small upstart at the time. So he lead the charge and that was pretty dope when I was a 15-year-old kid living in Sudbury.

What character from a movie do you most relate to?

Fiver in *Watership Down*.

What is your big fear?

Immobility.

How do you and your brother [skate photographer Scott Pommier] influence each other?

We have introduced each other to so many different things. I can't even imagine what I would be like if I didn't grow up with Scott. He is pretty integral to the person I am today and I'm sure he would say the same of me. Scott has showed me what hard work and sacrifice can lead to. He has such a strong work ethic and is sharp as a tack figuratively and literally. Yes, he is a very pointy young lad. Ouch.

Where is your art going next? Any new mediums or stuff you're changing?

I think I'll be changing a lot of the imagery I have relied upon for the past few years. Once I finish paintings for a show I always feel that it is time for a change. I don't really plan what to do next. I just roll with what I'm drawing in my sketchbook at the time. There is no medium shift at the moment. Oil painting will always be what I love to do. Watercolor is still pretty new to me and I'm happy with what I am producing so that will continue.

What song did you have your first make-out session to?

Something by Led Zeppelin. The fact that was

playing in the background will forever piss me off because I really can't stand that band and it will always be with me. It was only playing because I was at my friend's apartment and I put the tape on because I thought the girl would like it. As it turns out it didn't really matter what I put on, so I wish it had been Black Flag or the Dead Kennedys.

What are some of your favorite skateboard graphics ever?

I have always been a fan of the Chris Miller decks from the '89-'90 period—the ones with the drawings of the cats. The Mike Hill period at Alien Workshop was also pretty kick ass, all those dioramas. I really get a big kick out of skate graphics from the early '90s because there were no rules—nobody was thinking of branding or marketing. There was almost no money in skateboarding so nobody cared all that much about the graphics, a lot [of boards] didn't even have company logos or pro names on them. There are some real gems from that period, boards that would never see the light of day if you produced them today.

List five random things that are making you happy at this moment in time.

A day out with [my girlfriend] Tiffany and the dog. Morning coffee. Faber Castel pens. Apple products. Velcro.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

“Panda”
“Captain America”
“Walrus”
“Vampire”
“Blue”

THIS PAGE:

“Versus”
“Buckminster”
“Bilbybosch”
Sketchbook excerpts



SENSE AND NONSENSE

ALTERNET'S NEW BOOK OFFERS A YOUTHFUL REVOLUTION IN POLITICS—OLD LEFTIES WATCH OUT!

WORDS: JAMES MAYO ILLUSTRATION: UPSO

In the aftermath of the 2004 election, countless scribes have performed autopsies on the Democratic body politic—unfortunately they've emerged with a message that's about as coherent as John Kerry's vision for a New America. AlterNet's *Start Making Sense: Turning the Lessons of Election 2004 Into Winning Progressive Politics* (softcover; Chelsea Green Publishing, \$12), edited by Don Hazen and Lakshmi Chaudhry, attempts to better address the myopia that has blindsided Democrats and progressives alike.

Taking a more pragmatic approach than the majority of post-2004 election books, *Start Making Sense* compiles interviews and essays from some of the brightest minds in the progressive camp. AlterNet (alternet.org) bills itself as an "infomediary;" since 1998, it has served as a warehouse where one can find articles from the alternative press as well as valuable resources for grassroots organizing.

The book is organized into three sections—"Looking Back," "Looking Forward," and "Getting Active"—and includes analysis from people like Naomi Klein, Thomas Frank, and MoveOn.org co-founder Wes Boyd, among others. Take the example of Adam Werbach who, at 23, became the

youngest president of the Sierra Club and who co-founded the Apollo Alliance, an organization devoted to ending US dependence on foreign oil. After the election, Werbach composed a November 3rd thesis and, in homage to Martin Luther, nailed his manifesto of grievances to the door of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington D.C. As he states: "When the Senate Democratic leader is defeated while spending \$16 million to get the majority of 500,000 votes, the problem is not a lack of funding or effort."

While the book includes diverse perspectives, a common theme is that the Democrats have little chance of success if they continue to pursue their current poll-driven, top-down managerial strategy—a strategy that has little connection to the Democrats' historically grassroots base and offers nothing in terms of vision other than an anti-Bush platform.

A typical critique comes from commentator and California gubernatorial candidate Arianna Huffington. She argues that Kerry and his advisors drove his operation "straight over the edge of the Grand Canyon" by abandoning the tough language he used early in the campaign, when lambasting those "Benedict Arnold corporations" who outsource labor and hide their profits in tax shelters overseas. She believes that a cautious strategy designed to appease Wall Street and not alienate "swing voters" is a prescription for failure.

While Kerry's capitulation is cause for despair, what sets *Start Making Sense* apart is its inclusion of activist success stories. Markos Moulitsas Zúniga, a child refugee survivor from war-torn El Salvador and US Army vet, helped jumpstart the blogging revolution with DailyKos.com, a meeting site for activists who have helped organize against behemoths like the Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. On the eve of the election, Sinclair ordered its numerous television stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary. By targeting the station's advertisers, the bloggers forced the station to produce a more balanced documentary.

Start Making Sense makes it clear that the 2004 election has provided progressives with a mandate to get actively involved in changing the direction of the country. Whether it's lobbying for voter machine reform, participating in the anti-war movement or starting your own activist organization, now is the time for a creative re-envisioning of possibilities. The book's last section provides provocative suggestions on how to accomplish this.

Start Making Sense concludes with Barack Obama's impassioned speech at the Democratic convention. In the address, he says: "It is that fundamental belief—I am my brother's keeper, I am my sister's keeper—that makes this country work."

Start Making Sense is available now. www.chelseagreen.com

XLPRR (ISSN 1526-4246) is published monthly with bimonthly issues in January/February and July/August for \$20 a year by Amalgam Media, Inc., 425 Divisadero Street #203A, San Francisco, CA, 94117. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to XLPRR, 1388 Haight Street, #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

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